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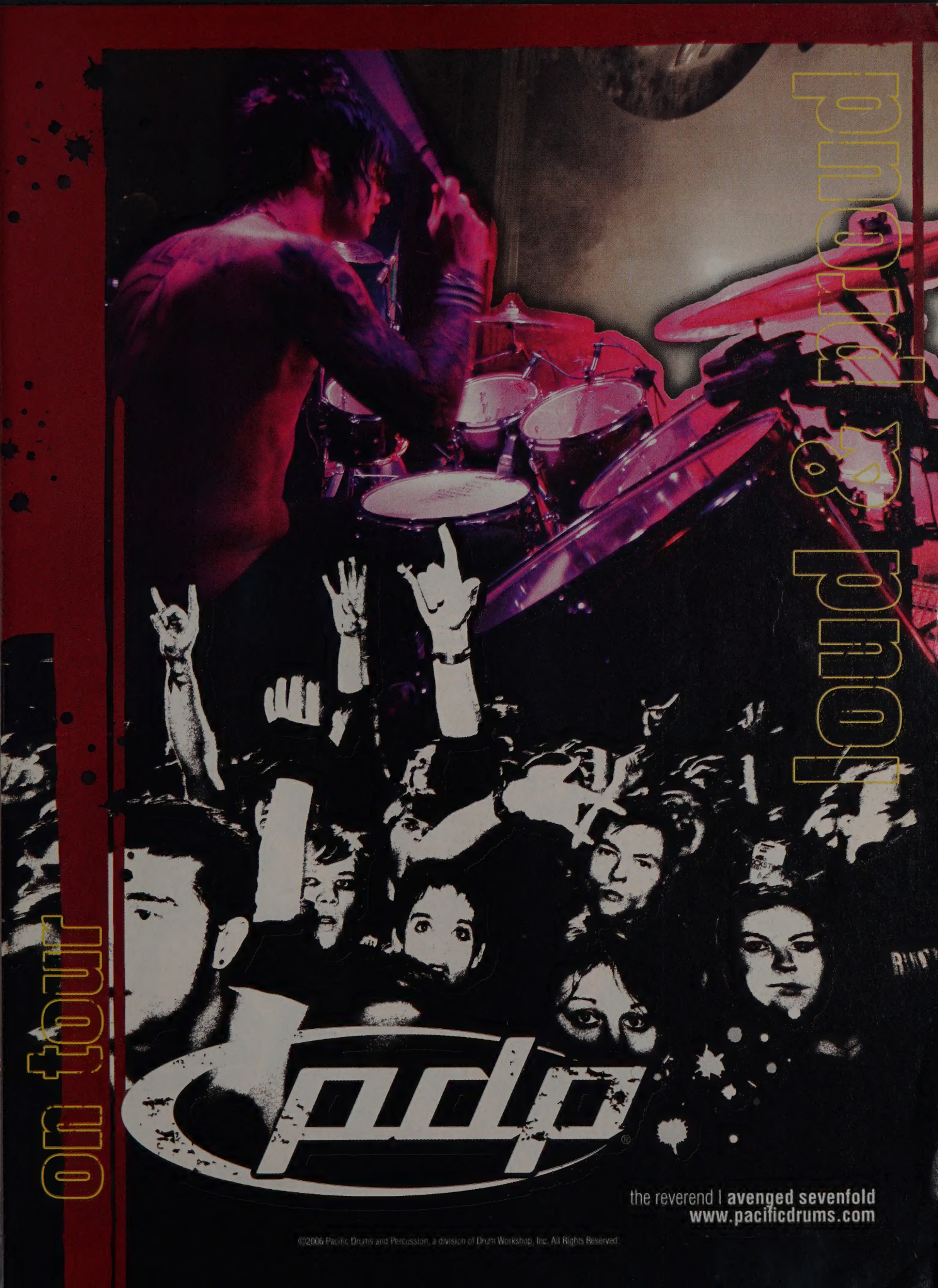
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BLASTS FROM THE PAST

As a long-time follower of the heavy metal scene, I think it's great that legendary bands like Iron Maiden, Motorhead and Slayer have

returned to action with such great albums. I have nothing against this generation of metal bands (in fact I like Lamb of God and Mastodon very much) but there's something

about the "classic" sounds that these bands create that nobody else can match. Metal has always been about intensity, imagination and intelligence—qualities that each of these bands show off in spades.

Mike
Seattle, WA

I worry that legendary bands like Metallica and AC/DC totally camouflage the efforts of exciting new bands like Eighteen Visions, Killswitch Engage and Avenged Sevenfold. Even when they're not releasing new albums or touring, magazines like **Hit Parader** shed so much focus upon these hallowed rock veterans that they do a disservice to metal's new breed.

Leon
Detroit, MI

I think it's great that old-school rockers like Ozzy, Korn and Slayer have chosen to take a lot of today's top young band under their wing—especially on the road. That's



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what metal has been missing in recent years. In the past, major bands would tour arenas on a regular basis and drag two or perhaps even three younger bands along with them. Now you rarely see bands in are-



Ozzy: Proving his point.

nas, so you depend on summer festivals for such activity to take place. Thanks to the bands I mentioned earlier, the knowledge and the experience of metal's best is being passed on to a new generation.

Mandy
Boston, MA

KNOT NEEDED

So how are you folks at **Hit Parader** dealing with the fact that Slipknot isn't doing anything in 2007? I mean those ugly masked mugs were on *every* cover for a solid year! Have you turned your attention to Stone Sour, or are you actually allowing some other very deserving metal "light" to shine down onto your famed pages? I love what you present... the *best* in heavy metal. But it is good that you've been forced to put the Knot on the back burner... at least for the time being.

Tom
Santa Monica, CA

I miss Slipknot. There, I said it! I MISS SLIPKNOT! What I've realized in their absence is that there really isn't another band in the rock world who can take their place. It's kind'a the way I imagine it was back in the '70s when even Kiss took a hia-

tus. Who could replace them? Nobody? Who can replace Slipknot? NOBODY!
Pam
St. Paul, MN

Good riddance to Slipknot!!! This time, I hope they go through on the rumors of a few years back and decide to "retire." The rock world has had enough of their hideous masks and one-dimensional sound. It's time for new blood to take over. Listen to Cradle of Filth if you want to hear a *great* shock rock band. They, at least, have talent; or perhaps it's because they're British which makes them naturally superior to your weak brand of American metal.
Geoff
London, England

It's amazing that Mudvayne have been able to reestablish their stellar credentials after dropping most of their theatrical side-show. For too long they were viewed by too many as a second-rate version of Slipknot, though anyone in-the-know always was aware that Mudvayne could play rings around the Knot, even with their hands surgically sutured into their pockets. Now Mudvayne are considered true stars of the hard rock world and all I can say is that it's about time.
Sean

Ft. Meyers, FL

METAL VARIETY

I love the wide variety of bands that are currently on the hard rock market—and featured on the pages of **Hit Parader** every month. On one hand you have the cerebral brilliance of bands like Tool, you have the cutting edge intensity of the Deftones and you have the over-the-top sensationalism of System of a Down. I don't think there's ever been a better time for hard rock music.

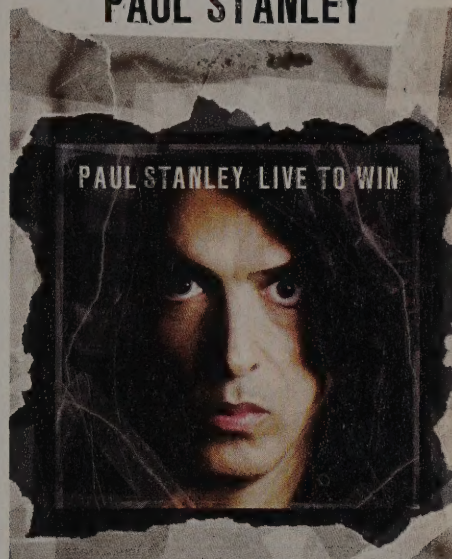
Pete
Springfield, IL

What a night I had! I was transferring a lot of my music onto my I-Pod, and it made me realize how many incredible bands there are... and that I love 'em all! The new Hatebreed album really rocks, as do the new ones from 10 Years, Eighteen Visions and Unearth. I mixed in some of my old faves like Zeppelin and Sabbath, and the transition was seamless. Metal rocks on!

Jessica
Laredo, TX

How come more attention isn't being paid to Breaking Benjamin? I know this magazine does the occasional interview...

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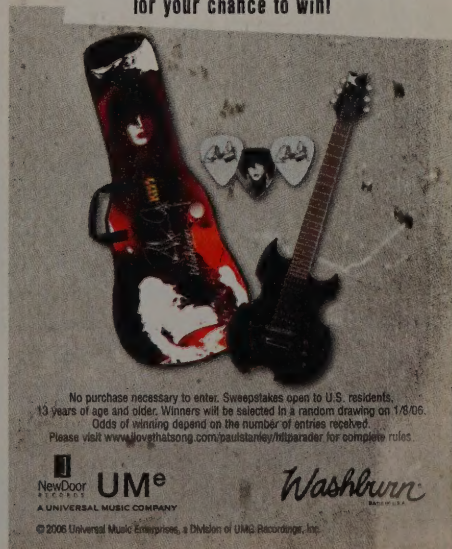
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but not enough. And despite always having songs on the radio and MTV, they just don't seem to get the kind of attention that a lot of far-less talented bands seem to receive. Is it because they look too "normal"? Maybe if they paint their faces and put on some silly clothes they'll be considered stars.

Chris
Queens, NY

Hey dudes— more Lacuna Coil, less of *everything* else. Why not do one of those wall-size posters of Christina Scabbia? I know it would certainly brighten up my dreary room. Thanks

Dave
Mooreville, IN

What's up with Audioslave? I mean I just picked up their **Out of Exile** album a few months ago, and here comes **Revelations**. Such an ambitious recording schedule is nothing short of, dare I say it, a revelation. On top of that, you can hear that this wasn't some rushed, throw-away project. I think it has the best music this unit has ever recorded.

Nate
Tucson, AZ

Rage Against the Machine:
Sorely missed.



Slipknot: Laying low

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CAUGHT IN THE ACT

BY DAMON LANCASTER

GODSMACK

Sully Erna was ready to go. It was still almost an hour before he and bandmates Tony Rombola (guitar), Robbie Merrill (bass) and Shannon Larkin (drums) were scheduled to take the stage, but Godsmack's tightly-wired vocalist could barely contain his unbridled energy. As the minutes sloooooowly rolled by, Erna did whatever he could to fill the time. He paced, he sat, he stretched, he talked with various stagehands and hangers-on, clearly doing just about everything in his power to take his mind directly off the on-stage proceedings that would soon turn his world inside-out.

"When you're on the road, you basically live for the time you spend on stage," he explained. "Everything else, no matter how important or how enjoyable, is basically just killing time between shows. The hour or so before you go on is really the magical time. Everything begins to focus in on the show and the performance. I do get kind of intense during that time because I want to almost explode when I hit the stage."

"When you're on the road, you basically live for the time you spend on stage."

When teamed with Godsmack's ever-growing roster of instantly-recognizable hits, Erna's "explosive" on-stage persona has served as the catalyst that has pushed this Boston-based band to the very apex of heavy music success. With four platinum-selling albums (their self-titled debut, *Awake*, *Faceless* and their new *IV*) to their credit, and a string of sold-out tours highlighting their resume, there seems to be no stopping this power-packed unit. But Erna quickly acknowledges

that while he revels in his band's studio success and media recognition, it is on the concert stage, performing in front of thousands-upon-thousands of Smack-heads, that his musical life attains its true purpose.

"I can't compare performing on stage with anything else in my life," he said. "It's such a pure, total release, and when you're connecting with the fans, there's just nothing better. For me, it's just an honor to get on-stage for these people and be allowed to play our music. It's something that none of us will ever take for granted. Everything that we are, and everything that we will be in this business is due totally to the support that the fans have given us."

Those who have witnessed Godsmack on-stage during their latest road excursion know exactly of what Erna speaks. From the moment they take the stage, the group's live set is a non-stop orgy of pulsating riffs, razor-edged melodies and from-the-gut vocal forays. Whether they're tearing through such time-tested hits as *Voodoo*, *I Stand Alone* and *Keep Away* or delivering more recent audience-grabbers like *Speak*, this powerhouse quartet delivers their

rock and roll goods with a fire and passion too-rarely heard these days. On a nightly basis, Erna will stop the show to cajole and confront his fans, urging those in the upper rows to get up and join in on the action. At times his stark interaction with the crowd can be jarring and emotional, but there's no question that his intentions always remain squarely upon providing all in attendance with an unforgettable night of power-packed action.

"There is a bond that we form with the fans every night," Erna said. "We want to give them everything we have, and we want them

to have the best time they can possibly have. We believe that the more involved they are with the show, the more fun they'll have."

As Godsmack has continued to tour the world in support of *IV*, the crowds they've confronted have shared a number of uniquely similar qualities—they've all been large, they've all been loud and they've all been supportive. Those are facts that have helped

Sully Erna: "I can't compare performing on stage with anything else in my life."



turn virtually every show along the band's tour trail into true celebrations of the inherent majesty of rock and roll. But just looking at Erna pour his heart and soul into every song on stage, you get the distinct feeling that he simply wouldn't have it any other way.

"We know how fortunate we are to be able to do something we love and to have people respond to it the way they have," he said. "This is so important to us—we want to keep sharing it with as many people as we can."

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BAND ON THE RISE!
SHOOTING STARS
BY SAM HATCHER



"Our name has caused us some problems over the years."

It takes guts... balls... *chutzpah*... to name your hard rock band Quietdrive. After all, the best case scenario is that you might initially get confused with one of those lilting, soft-rock bands that all the "easy listening" stations seem so fond of playing. The worst case scenario is that someone with bad eyesight confuses you with Quiet Riot... yikes! But this Minneapolis based unit comprised of vocalist Kevin Truckenmiller, guitarist Matt Kirby, guitarist Justin Bonhiver, bassist Droo Hastings and drummer Brandon Lanier doesn't seem particularly concerned that their unusual band name may land them in hot water. They figure once people get to hear the contents of their debut disc,

When All That's Left Is You,

any and all such confusion will quickly be silenced under

the barrage of powerful riffs and hard-hitting melodies that this quintet brings forth.

"That name has caused us some problems over the years," Bonhiver said. "We actually gave serious thought to changing it before this album came out. We even went so far as to donate all of our Quietdrive T-shirts to the local Salvation Army because we didn't think we'd need 'em any more. But after we spent a few days trying to think of a better name, we decided that Quietdrive wasn't so bad after all. We then tried to get our shirts back... but it was too late. They had already been distributed out to

people around the country, so I guess you might see a lot of homeless people walking around in new Quietdrive T-shirts. It's a different sort of marketing campaign."

When it comes to marketing their music, the members of Quietdrive are already seasoned pros: While **When All That's Left Is You** represents their initial foray into the "conventional" major label music biz, this unit has already learned the ropes through their highly successful experiences on the MySpace.com web address. It was there that literally hundreds of thousands of fans first discovered this group's uniquely hard driving sound

really opened up the doors for us."

Their MySpace acclaim led the band onto the road, where in addition to a series of gigs at the 2004 Warped Tour, they performed their set in every club, dive and hole-in-the-wall they could find. But lo-and-behold, their on-stage acumen, teamed with their MySpace notoriety resulted in the labels not only finding Quietdrive, but wanting to sign them. By mid-2005 the band had inked their deal and moved into the studio to begin laying down the tracks for **When All That's Left Is You**, where their varied influences—which they admit range from Nirvana to Zeppelin to Elton John—began to shine

"We feel like fans have only gotten a small taste of what we can do."

thanks to the band's decision to feature early, home-recorded versions of the tunes *Take a Drink* and *Rise From the Ashes* on their site. The response was immediate... and it was overwhelming, with the band's MySpace site receiving upwards of 10,000 hits a day, resulting in them becoming MySpace's main-page "top artist" for a solid week.

"We worked MySpace through message boards and e-mails," Kirby said. "And we started to get an amazing response. The two songs we put up ended up being down-loaded over 400,000 times, which is amazing when you consider that we didn't have any label support or any kind of advertising campaign behind us. It

through on such songs as *Rush Together*, *Time After Time* and *Maybe Misery*. Now these guys realize it's time for this band with the unusual name and the equally unusual sound to start taking things to the next level.

"We feel like fans have only gotten a small taste of what we can do," Kirby said. "This represents a starting point for us—but it's a place that we all like and feel very comfortable with. This album is exactly where this band is in 2006... but even we wonder how much that's gonna change in the months and years to come."

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PICK HIT

BY PATRICK ZANETTI



"We wanted to create something that would blow people's heads off when they heard it."

Throw together six rockers with radically different cultural heritages and a shared love of powerful, wall-shaking, experimental heavy metal and what you end up with is something strongly akin to the band known as DragonForce. As shown throughout this British unit's latest disc, *Inhuman Rampage*, their unique backgrounds—with members hailing from England, South Africa, Ukraine and France—and combined musical passions have now apparently placed them on the precipice of world-wide metal renown. But for vocalist ZP Threat, guitarist Herman Li, guitarist Sam Totman, bassist Frederic Leclercq, keyboardist Vadim Pruzhanov and drummer David Macintosh, their quest isn't really about becoming rich or famous (though they certainly wouldn't complain if that were to happen.) It's more about getting as many people as possible to hear this unit's very special take on time-tested metal philosophies.

"When we started working on this album, we did so with one goal in mind," Li said. "And that was to create something totally unique—and something that would just blow people's heads off when they heard it. I may be a bit prejudiced, but I do believe we've accomplished that goal. And we've been incredibly rewarded to hear how many other people seem to share that opinion. The press throughout Europe has really gotten behind this release—and the fans have responded even better than we could have imagined."

Throughout *Inhuman Rampage* DragonForce continually put on display the myriad metal qualities that have already made them Continental sensations. From the roaring thunder of *Through the Fire and Flames* to the sonic fury that distinguishes *Revolution Deathsquad*, it is clear that this is one band on a hell-bent mission to revitalize the entire hard rock world. And perhaps most amazingly, while snippets of past metal champions can be detected throughout DF's latest outing, for the most part their material rings like a true, clear

and totally original claxon call—a true badge of honor in these decidedly "lazy" rock and roll times.

"We've never been a band to deny our influences," Li said. "But we've never been a band to depend on them. Whatever turned us on has only served as our starting point—the place from which we can take off and make our own mark. We work hard at making this music—we're not a band that can 'jam' for a few minutes and feel satisfied."

For DragonForce, life began back in 1999 when Li, Threat and Totman first met in a London club. They quickly noted their shared musical vision and within months they had started writing and performing under the name DragonHeart. In 2001, they changed their moniker to DragonForce and rounded out their fledgling unit's lineup, expanding to a six-man front that gave all involved plenty of room to strut their sizable "stuff" on both album and stage. The band's initial release, *Valley of the Damned*, emerged in 2003, with a follow-up, *Sonic Firestorm*, hitting record store shelves a year later. But it wasn't until a new label stepped into the fold in time for the recording and release of *Inhuman Rampage* that these guys felt that their world-wide quest for metallic recognition might be truly fulfilled.

"We've been able to do quite well for ourselves in Europe," Li said. "And Japan has been very supportive, as well. We've toured with the likes of Iron Maiden, and done the festival route. But we wanted more. I think with our new record deal, and with *Inhuman Rampage*, we're on our way to accomplishing all of that. This album is clearly the next step for us. There are only eight songs on it, because we really like to stretch out and show off a little bit. This is a very musical band... many of the songs go for seven minutes—or more! In concert, they'll frequently go even longer. But I think it's safe to say that if you come to see us you definitely won't be bored."

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16 HIT PARADER

BY THOMAS BURKE

If he could, Zakk Wylde would probably play rock and roll 24 hours a day... every day! As it happens, in 2006 the lanky New Jersey-born guitar legend is coming pretty darn close to doing just that. Not only is he recording and touring with Black Label Society (who were main-stage headliners at this year's *Ozzfest*), he also performed double-duty by following the exact same recording/touring regimen with his mentor, Ozzy Osbourne—with Wylde serving as his right-hand man. Having previously recorded with Ozzy

on such landmark discs as *No Rest For The Wicked*, *No More Tears* and *Ozzmosis*, Wylde is intimately aware of the requirements surrounding Osbourne in the studio. And having toured with him off-and-on for the last 20 years, he's also intimately aware of what it takes to make Ozzy's live set work.

"Working with Ozzy is always an incredible experience," he said. "I don't think he's ever received enough credit as an innovator and as a songwriter. He's become almost a cartoon-like character to a lot of people because of the TV show, but he's a true metal legend—and he's earned every bit of respect that he gets."

On the occasions when he hasn't been helping the Ozz stay at the top of the rock pile, Wylde has found time to further embellish his stellar credentials in Black Label Society, a hard-edged unit that has allowed this axe ace to explore the other sides of his rock and roll personality. As shown throughout BLS's latest disc, *Shot to Hell*, Wylde has once again tapped into the heavy music mother lode, delivering a wall-shaking, ground-quaking collection guaranteed to leave all who experience it with a definite ringing in their ears.

"This is the eighth Black Label Society album," Wylde said. "And to me it may be both the best and the most important album I've ever done. It's the best one because it really kicks ass from start to finish, and while that news probably doesn't surprise any fans that much, there's a depth to the material here that blows a lot of the earlier stuff away. I just signed with a new label, and that's very exciting for me. They think Black Label Society can go all the way to the top—and I believe 'em when they say it."

Even the most cursory run through the material featured on *Shot to Hell* reveals exactly what Wylde is talking about. On tracks *Hell is High*, *New Religion* and the disc's first single, *Concrete Jungle*, the guitarist's distinctive, blues-based riffs carry each and every track to dizzying heights, while his ever-improving vocal skills provide these songs with a depth and substance not previously encountered. Now a decade into Black Label Society's recording career, Wylde seems to have hit upon just the right formula for presenting his own musical sound.

"My music will always reflect who I am as a person, and the music that influenced me," he said. "There will always be a bit of Sabbath and Zeppelin in there, but there will also be just enough Skynyrd to keep things from being too predictable. Those are the bands that rocked my world back then, and they're still a major

influence now. It's all the stuff that a kid growing up in Jersey during the '70s was able to absorb—and then try to present in his own way."

Indeed Wylde has come a long way since his teen-aged years in the Garden State. It was there in 1987, at the tender age of 19, that he was plucked from virtual obscurity to replace Jake E. Lee in Ozzy's band. Since that moment there's been little time for looking back for this long and lean six string master. His time with Ozzy and BLS has

been off-set with an occasional acting gig (he was type-cast as the wild and crazy guitarist in the movie *Rock Star*) and

"The label believes we can go all the way to the top."



Zakk Wylde: "This may be both the best and the most important album I've ever done."

TV appearances. And while he knows he's never gonna win any *Oscars* for his acting skills, don't try to get Wylde to choose favorites between Ozzy and Black Label Society. As he indicated, it would be like choosing your favorite child.

"They're both part of my heart," he said. "I could never choose. Ozzy has been great in that he's always encouraged me to keep playing in Black Label Society even when he's needed me in the studio or on the road. So far, I really haven't run into any major conflict, and I hope I never will. All I know right now is that 2006 is shaping up as a busy year where I plan on touring with BLS and recording with Ozzy. And you know what? I love it!"

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FALLEN HEROES AD

COLLISION COURSE

HP Reveals The Latest CDs, DVDs & Anything else we darn well please!

rating system: *****awesome *****slammin' *****smokin' **lame *trash

Each month we like to put two of our top *Hit Parader* staffers in a room with a stack of new releases. Sometimes they agree on the quality of these recent arrivals—more often, they don't. Either way, we call this exercise in musical futility **Collision Course**.

IRON MAIDEN, A MATTER OF LIFE & DEATH

Iron Maiden have been doing the heavy metal voodoo that they do so well for more than 25 years. There's no question that by now they've got this whole quasi-mystical, semi-magical, highly metallical strain of guitar-driven intensity down to a science. But on their latest collection, **A Matter of Life & Death**, rather than merely relying on time-tested Maiden formulas, these hallowed British veterans attempt to expand their creative scope... often with startling results. While this may not be as outwardly experimental as the band's previous disc, **Dance of Death** (these fast-aging rockers do seem a tad pre-occupied with the Grim Reaper, don't they?) it stands as one of the most challenging—and thoroughly entertaining—efforts of their lengthy career.

RATING: ****

If there truly is a thing called "Old School" metal, then Iron Maiden must represent those dudes who first did the cave paintings in our distant past. This is "roots" rock at its most strident and in-yer face. But I do give Bruce and his boys a nod of credit; they seem never willing to trod on well-worn musical turf. Rather, they keep tinkering with the engine that's kept the Maiden Metal Machine running so long... and so well.

RATING: ***

AUDIOSLAVE, REVELATIONS

Wow, didn't we just have two new albums from Audioslave like... last year?? But please don't think I'm complaining about the totally ambitious recording schedule that this highly acclaimed "supergroup" has chosen to undertake. In fact, the band's third studio disc, **Revelations** is a solid step better than their '05 release, **Out of Exile**. That was a solid effort, but it seemed to be missing a touch of the commercial gloss that helped turn their self-titled debut into a multi-platinum smash back in 2003. This time around, the Slave patrol has pulled out all the stops in their efforts to deliver a powerful and at times biting collection (*Wide Awake* is the most politically savvy track these guys have done since most of them were in Rage Against the Machine) that adds



another glowing chapter to their quickly-expanding musical encyclopedia.

RATING: ***

All the hype that's surrounded Audioslave from the moment of their inception back in 2002 has often served to turn me off as much as it's turned me on. Sure, these guys have created some memorable songs, and made some incredible stands (such as being the first American rock band to perform in Cuba in over 30 years.) But the bottom line will always be their musical production, and while on **Revelations** they seem

IRON MAIDEN



more comfortable assuming a more "natural" artistic stance, I still believe this stuff pales when compared to the best work of their former bands—Soundgarden and Rage Against the Machine.

RATING: **

MOTORHEAD, KISS OF DEATH

The arrival of a new Motorhead disc is like the return of an old friend—a stinky, slovenly, beer-swilling, unshaven, leather-clad amigo who just-so-happens to scare the living daylights out of everyone else in your family. Ahhh, but isn't that the lingering appeal of Motorhead? It's like having your own gang of outlaw bikers right there in your living room, with Lemmy and his band of boleros supplying the expected dose of rough-around-the-edges (yet surprisingly melodic) hard rock. It can be argued that if you own one Motorhead album, you basically have 'em all (Hey, much the same can be said of AC/DC!) but the fact is that few bands deliver this brand of no-holds-barred metal better than this infamous lot.

RATING: ***

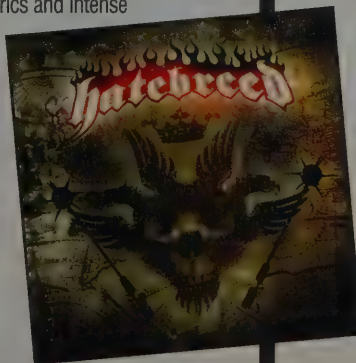
Can anyone even remotely familiar with the heavy metal realm not have a soft spot somewhere in their heart for Lemmy? From his facial moles, to his never-washed-'em denims, to his gravel-with-sandpaper vocals, this guy represents everything that a bad-ass rock and roll star should be. And once again on **Kiss of Death** Lemmy delivers the goods with expected power and passion. Let's face it, this dude has *forgotten* more about rock music than most of his fellow musicians will ever know.

RATING: ***

HATEBREED, SUPREMACY

Hatebreed have long been predicted—by those who predict such things—to emerge as The Next Big Thing in the heavy metal world. Well... we're still waiting. Fact is, the band's new album, **Supremacy**, is probably their best effort to-date. But at the same time, the band's up-from-the-gutter lyrics and intense

sounds have begun to come across as somewhat dated remnants of a fast-fading metallic era. It's not as if frontman/vocalist Jamey Jasta has lost his feel for the cutting edge.



It's more that with increasing age and growing self-confidence, Jasta has apparently lost a bit of the "underdog" mantra that first helped this New England-based unit rise to power in the late '90s.

RATING: **

Jamey Jasta sees himself as a new-age metal star—and perhaps he should. After all, the guy in a human

dynamo who in addition to fronting Hatebreed, runs his own record label, hosts MTV2's *Headbanger's Ball* and owns his own tattoo emporium. It's amazing that the dude even finds time to write and record new music. But write new music he has for the Breed's latest disc, **Supremacy**—an album on which Jasta plainly turns a corner away from the dark and depressing visions that filled this unit's earlier efforts and towards a slightly more uplifting lyrical persona. While at first such a move may strike log-time band followers as a bit hard-to-accept, after a few listenings, this stuff really begins to strike home.

RATING: ***

BREAKING BENJAMIN, PHOBIA

Breaking Benjamin rank as one of the true success stories of recent hard rock

vintage. When this unit first came on the scene with their 2002 debut disc, **Saturate**, little was known, and even less was expected from this talented bunch. But on a string of radio-ready hits—on which the band sacrificed little of their hard rocking intensity—the BB boys proved that they were ready for Big Time action. Now, once again on their third release, **Phobia**, Breaking Benjamin

prove that they are one of the most musically proficient and commercially cognizant rockers around. While their pander-to-the-masses style may not sit well with everyone, the fact is that these guys are on the verge of emerging as one of the few truly significant (at least in a sales sense) hard rock bands of the 21st Century.

RATING: ***

Oh God! Whenever I listen to Breaking Benjamin (which usually happens only at gun point... or when I'm being paid to do so) I get the sensation that these guys throw a bunch of ideas into a computer and emerge with the most marketable brand of hard rock they can imagine. They're in a league with the likes of Chevelle and Disturbed as bands that superficially seem "cutting edge" but in reality are playing it "safe"... following rules of music conduct as old as the rock form itself.

RATING: **



TOOL

METALLICA: Despite some "major progress" in recent weeks, it still appears as if Metallica's new disc won't be ready for release before the spring. According to our on-the-scene sources, the band has already completed half-a-dozen tracks for the new release (their first since 2003's *St. Anger*) and that they plan on recording right through the end of 2006. "We've never been the fastest band in the studio," said drummer Lars Ulrich. "But I think our fans know that when we finally do release something, it's usually worth waiting for."

SLAYER: They certainly aren't strangers of controversy, but the flood of protest and distraction that followed in the wake of the release of their new disc, *Christ Illusion*, has surprised even the members of Slayer. The band's graphic album cover (featuring a rather battered and torn image of Christ himself) has enraged church groups, and the inclusion of songs such as *Jihad* have turned some radio programmers away from the legendary metal contingent's new music. "People fear what they don't understand," said bassist/vocalist Tom Araya. "That's something that has followed us around for the last 20 years."

AUDIOSLAVE: Tom Morello admits that he's never waited nearly four months after an album's been released before hitting the road. But that's what the guitarist and his Audioslave bandmates decided to do following the fall release of *Revelations*, the band's third disc—and one that follows only a year after the release of their sophomore effort, *Out of Exile*. "There's nothing wrong with letting fans grow familiar with an album before going on tour," Morello said. "That way you can comfortably play whatever you want without worrying that you're shoving unknown material down their throats."

OZZY: Ozzy Osbourne admits that working in the

recording studio is not one of his favorite activities. Oh sure, the legendary Metal Madman *loves* having recorded... it's just that he hates recording. "I've always approached making an album the same way," he said. "I write things that I like, and hope that other people like them as well. To be honest, if things go the way I want, there will be enough material for two albums, so that one can come out this spring, and the other can come out a year later... and I can tour at various points throughout that time."

MEGADETH: Dangerous Dave Mustaine has seen and done it all over the last 25 years. But rarely

has Megadeth's main man been happier, healthier or more focused than he is at the moment... especially with the sounds contained on his reconstructed band's new disc, *United Abominations*. "There was a point a few years ago, after I suffered my arm injury, when I thought it was over," he said. "Something like that makes you appreciate what you have that much more. All of this is a blessing at this point—and the music reflects my excitement."

TOOL: Tool's music has been known to excite the body as well as the mind. But when more than a dozen fans were injured at a San Diego performance a few months back, it forced singer Maynard James Keenan to stop and consider his band's on-stage power. "It's very intimidating," he said. "At times you feel as if you have thousands of people under your control... and at other times you look down and see things developing that you can't control at all. You see people being pushed and trampled and it's the worst feeling in the world. You try to tell them to calm down, that it's just music, and sometimes they just don't listen."

IRON MAIDEN: When a band with the legendary stature of Iron Maiden releases a new album, there are always questions and controversy surrounding virtually every aspect of the project... from the album cover artwork to the choice of a first single and video. In the case of *A Matter of Life and Death*, the selection of the seven-minute long epic, *The Reincarnation of Benjamin Breeg* as the kick-off video has raised eyebrows on both sides of the Atlantic. "We admit that the choice of that song may surprise some people," said bassist Steve Harris. "But we felt it was something different for us. At this point in our career, doing the unexpected is what keeps everything interesting."

VELVET REVOLVER: Rumors of various nature continue to swirl around Velvet Revolver as the



STONE SOUR

star-studded unit completes work on their second album. But, thankfully, rather than focusing on any sort of sordid off-stage activities, most of this talk centers around the contents of the band's album. With early conversation that the disc was going to be a "concept album" now out the proverbial window, we left it up to drummer Matt Sorum to fill us in on what the disc *will* feature. "It's gonna rock," he said with a smile. "Are you surprised by that? But I think that we're all more comfortable with each other this time around, which has allowed us to experiment a bit more, as well."

MUDVAYNE: It's back to work for Mudvayne. After taking a short but well-deserved break from the rigors of the rock and roll world, this highly eclectic, and often very theatrical band has slowly begun to piece together ideas for their next album. According to vocalist Chad Gray, don't expect to see a new disc from the Vayne until late '07, but when it arrives, he promises it'll be something special. "We're so confident at the moment," he said. "It's almost scary for us. We can't wait to see what we come up with next."

STONE SOUR: Reflecting the rocket-like sales start of their second disc, **Come What(ever) May**, Stone Sour have certainly been making up for lost time—the four years that have passed since the release of their debut disc, **Stone Sour**. The band's new album has steadily gained momentum since its chart release last summer, and has now sold more copies than it's gold-attaining predecessor. And the band has been doing everything in their power to keep the momentum rolling, jumping aboard the Disturbed-powered *Music As A Weapon* tour almost immediately after their *Family Values* road responsibilities came to an end. "The fans are getting more familiar with us and with this music," said frontman Corey Taylor. "And what's cool is that they're really responding to what they've been hearing."



BREAKING NEWS

BY LOU O'NEILL, JR.

ON DEADLINE: IT WAS SCARY...that's for sure, but we're glad to report that Disturbed's lead yapper, David Draiman, has successfully undergone yet a second surgery, this time for a deviated septum. Earlier, the creative force behind one of our favorite bands went under-the-knife for stomach and lung problems. Phew!!! Talk about being around doctors for too long!

As David explained to the Man and Women of the Fourth Estate, "I had broken my nose more than three times and it was starting to effect my voice. The operation was a septoplasty. I had all kinds of broken bones, cartilage and shrapnel 'n' stuff in there. You know, most septums for normal people are straight, mine was kind of like the shape of an 'S'...I'll just say this it was **not** a pretty operation!"

COMMENT: One Could hardly imagine having your nose sliced open as a "pretty operation." It would be better for you to check out definitions to appreciate David Draiman's pain and suffering. The good news is that Disturbed is rocking again and DD appears to be in as fine of shape as ever. Stay tuned!

SECRET STUFF: A Titanic scandal may break public any time now about that metal maniac who charged off on his income taxes all the drugs and "Ladies of the Night" that were filed as "Company Expenses." My gosh: the authorities were not amused!!! We can say no more!

QUICKIE QUIZ: Last month, we posed a query that so many of you guessed wrong. Believe it or not...only a scant 7% of Americans are left-handed. Hey, so was Babe Ruth. O.K. This month there'll be no quarter, no mercy shown. With the howling of winter and season's first snow at our doorsteps...well, what was the hottest temperature **ever** recorded in America and name the location. Ha, ha, ha!!!

NO NAMES PLEEZE: That very famous metal band from England have a curious arrangement with their designer dude. His normally sky-high fee is next-to-nothing because of the well, curious arrangement he enjoys with the band. All apparel **must** be returned without being touched and drenched in the band's sweat. Crazy world, ain't it!

ROCK WIRE REPORT: Dave Mustaine of Megadeth had told friends he's over the feud (s) especially with former bassist Dave Ellefson. Ditto his beef with Metallica. Ruminating about Megadeth's current campaign with "Gigantour," it's quite interesting that hardly any of the metal bands are going out solo. There's "Family Values,"...there's the ubiquitous "Ozzfest,"...there's "Unholy Alliance Tour," etc, etc. Seems metal bands are doing it together these days and more power to them...A special Happy Birthday wish to Lars

Ulrich of Metallica. Lars lucked out by one day. He turns 43 on December 26th. One day earlier and who knows, what's a Christmas present or a birthday treat???

So weird to see Marilyn Manson posing with one of America's most iconic characters, Mickey Mouse. Manson, wearing dark shades and black lipstick, looked like he was taking the whole thing in as a goof. It tied in with a promo for Johnny Depp's *Pirate* pix. Marilyn cracked to a shocked press, "I've got



absinthe in my boots and I'm a pirate, too." Marilyn must have had a taste. Back to business: Manson *will* have a new album out in the new year...So glad to see the Stones back on the stage and making magic again after the Keith Richards' "accident." As Keith has always teased your veteran scribbler, "The Stones are done when the undertaker pulls up for me."...That wild daughter of one of the world's most important men got lucky when late-night calls were made so that an extremely unflattering portrait could be killed by the biggest paper in D.C. Hmmm.

OVER 'N' OUT: Stone Sour sold 80,000 copies of their CD the first week out. Considering what is actually purchased with real dollars these days, that's an impressive number. We all know, of course, that all of Stone Sour's success means that we will hear **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING** from Slipknot until 2008...Lamb Of God continually impress us as their career elevates to another level...Axl Rose generously visited cancer patients in London and certainly brightened the entire day. The cancer ward went whack-a-ding-hoy!

Flash: Metallica wind the year down by playing new tunes at their final '06 shows which means, dear readers, that there'll be nothing from Hetfield and Co. well into 2007. Lars told us, "the creative process works a little slower and it's not a bad thing, unless, of course, you're waiting for our record."

COMMENT: Yes, Lars, like the entire world!

SEE YOU NEXT MONTH. Happy New Year and please remember: *We wish all our readers a great 2007 and may the Good Lord protect the USA, too!*

TOOL

DAY TRIPPERS

BY R.J. MERKLE

Tool's Maynard James Keenan strolled through the bustling mid-town hotel lobby with a definite sense-of-purpose to his gate. He didn't look around to see if a horde of well-wishers, groupies or sundry hangers-on were about to descend upon him—and he didn't seem to care. Rather, he just forged ahead, seemingly immersed in his own little world, oblivious to any events that may have been transpiring around him. As it happened, there really wasn't much of *anything* occurring near Mr. Keenan—no rabid fans following hot in his footsteps, no scrappy media-types unmercifully hounding him, and no muscle-bound bodyguards protecting his ass from unseen menaces. It appeared as if Keenan was truly a man unto himself, a star who through his manner, mood and blend-right-in appearance seemed almost unaware of the trappings of his success.

Perhaps the low-key approach to stardom that Keenan and bandmates Danny Carey, Adam Jones and Justin Chancellor have assumed during their highly lauded 15 year career has played a major role in maintaining their fans' intense fascination with Tool. After all, how many other groups could lay as low as this band did during the four years that separated the releases of their previous disc, *Lateralus*, and their current chart-topping effort, *10,000 Days*, and only *increase* their popularity? In sharp contrast to the traditional platinum band approach of attempting to keep their names and faces in the spotlight as often and as lewdly as possible, the members of Tool seem to thrive on their anonymity. They don't appear in their own videos, hate taking promotional photos and rarely—if ever—show up together in public. Heck, these guys don't even appear on their own album covers! No wonder Keenan has been able to pass so freely through virtually every hotel lobby...and airport...and shopping mall the band has encountered during their current world tour.

"We've never done this to become famous," Keenan said. "We're doing this because it's what we do. It's a natural extension of who we are and what we are. If people find that a little different or mysterious, then I guess that's good."

In fact, one would be hard pressed to name a major band that has ever been more cloaked in mystery and intrigue than Tool. From their earliest days in 1992, following the release of their initial discs, *Sober* and *Opiate*, this quintessential quixotic unit began perfecting their unique formula for success; create some of the most thought-provoking

experimental and downright unusual music in the world, dress it in an array of superficially "metallic" trappings, and then release it on an unsuspecting world. At first, the band's approach was met with reactions ranging from confusion to outright disgust. But slowly and surely, as they relentlessly toured the North American continent, Tool began the difficult task of winning over the uninitiated. By the time their next disc, *Undertow*, hit the streets in the spring of 1993, the ground-swell of support the group had been cultivating began to evolve into a seething swarm of fanatics, all of whom were addicted to Tool's dark musical stylings.

and more grotesque Tool became, the more both their fame and infamy seemed to grow. It was a uniquely contemporary rock and roll formula—disgust your audience to the point where they demanded more!

"Every aspect of what we do, whether it's each song, each video or each album cover is tortured over by each of us," Jones said. "Nothing comes easy for this band. Nothing is merely thrown away. It took us a long time to complete this

"This band is a natural extension of who we are and what we are."

"When you never set out to get signed, or make albums, you are much more free to go after what truly motivates you," Jones explained. "With us, it was always the music and only the music. It had to inspire us and make us think—and it had to inspire everyone who heard it and make them think too. If it didn't do that, then what was the point of making it in the first place?"

Indeed, Tool's music did serve to inspire and did raise the thought quotient of all who encountered it. Through such ground-breaking songs as *Prison Sex*, Tool managed to bring an entirely new sound and style to the rock front line, proving in the process that in the mid-'90s there were truly to be no artistic bounds geared to constrict the creative intent of any band. Their videos further fueled their fame, with their unique stop-motion animation approach winning awards both for their creativity and their content. Despite their success, and despite their many industry awards, however, there were those within the music community who did little to hide their outright disdain for Tool, believing the band's approach was too dark and dreary for public consumption. But for every individual who was turned off by the group's style, there were more who loved the band for their brazen unpredictability and overt boldness, rallying to their cause like buzzards to a dead carcass. It seemed the stranger, more bizarre

album because that's how long it took us to get it to sound the way we wanted it to. There's nothing worse than creating something that's designed for instant disposability. That doesn't interest us at all.

Certainly with the arrival of *10,000 Days*, any lingering suspicion that Tool may now be softening their harsh artistic stance has been quickly, and perhaps permanently, discarded. This is an album that takes all the concepts presented on previous discs such as *Undertow* and *Aenima* and at times makes them look positively *commercial* in comparison. Few albums in recent rock history have been so unwaveringly intense, so continually perverse and so unfalteringly focused on the mission-at-hand. Many of Tool's new songs seem to tackle the issue of the band's ever-growing war with success head-on, in the process quickly eliminating any pretense that Tool have ever actually enjoyed their hard-won place in the contemporary music sun. This is a band that still exists in a dark, dank musical hole of their own design, and according to Keenan, no amount of fame, fortune and attention is ever going to lure Tool out of their dungeon of creative passion.

"Once you release an album you're a product," the singer said. "That's a fact of life. You can deny it to yourself, but deep down you know it's true. I heard fans say we sold out when the last albums became successful. I had to agree with them. We are a product. But we're also true to what we believe."

PHOTO: ANNAMARIA DISANTO



MAYNARD JAMES KEENAN

HP

Wolfmother vocalist/guitarist Andrew Stockdale shakes his shaggy head in mock disbelief when he thinks about the immediate and rather overwhelming impact his

Australian "acid rock" power trio has made on the American music landscape. After all, few bands in recent memory have made that kind of initial impression... especially bands that play the kind of fuzz-toned, heavily droned and apparently stoned brand of retro rock that this latest *Thunder From Down Under* (sorry, Angus) seem to favor. But when you consider the notion that Wolfmother's approach encapsulates some of the truly classic elements of hard rock history—from the ethereal "light/heavy" amalgam that

brought Led Zeppelin fame to the pulsating power that's turned countless riff mongers into arena-filling superstars—perhaps it isn't outrageous to think that Stockdale and his bandmates (bassist/keyboardist Chris Ross and drummer Myles Heskett) are on the verge of becoming hard rock's Next Big Thing.

"We've taken our influences and brought our own style to them," Stockdale said. "For whatever reason a

suled trio, it appears that their approach is as natural as a kangaroo's hop.

"This is something that comes out of the three of us when we all get together," Stockdale said. "We've heard some people say that our music reminds them of things they may have heard in the past, but that wasn't our original intent. When we get together to play, we bring together our tastes and influences and this is the sound that emerges. The fact is that we've been around for the last seven years. We met when we were all in college in Sydney, and we'd get together and jam whenever we could. It wasn't anything very formal or very focused—just three friends getting

The members of Wolfmother have been working to create their "magical" musical atmosphere for the last seven years. At first, after meeting in college in their native Sydney, their all-night jam sessions were designed as little more than a release from the daily grind, which by that point found each member pursuing a career decidedly away from music; Stockdale was a photographer, Ross a computer technician and Heskett a graphic designer. But despite the constant free-form sessions that these three held, it was—

WOLFMOTHER

together to

have some fun."

While some cynics have quickly moved to make the Wolfies the latest "poster boys" for hard rock's apparent lack of either originality or ingenuity, others feel equally inclined to site this trio as leaders of metal's latest renaissance. And the fact is that which ever side you may choose to sit on such a ticklish issue, there seems to be a great deal of sincerity in

n't until 2004

that they realized that their shared creative vision might be strong enough to allow them to pursue music on a full-time basis.

"We met when we were all in college, and we'd get together and jam whenever we could," Stockdale said. "When we started to jam together, sometimes we'd just play the same song for hours, working on the riff and just getting into the total vibe. That's what it was about for us for a long time—until I made a demo and we decided to pursue this in a more serious fashion."

Within months of making that momentous decision, the trio put out their first indie EP, a four-song collection which instantly raised a ruckus in the music-starved environs Down Under. They toured the Aussie countryside for the next six months, during which time they started writing the material that has now emerged as **Wolfmother**. But before they got around to recording that disc, the band underwent a culture

ROAR FROM THE OUTBACK

lot of people believe that every band must somehow emerge as something totally unique and different. I don't know if I believe that; we're all extensions of the same musical family tree. This is very much music intended to be listened to by today's rock and roll audience. But we certainly do have our influences from the '60s and '70s, and much of that is because we view that period as a very expressive, exciting time in rock history. I think that was particularly true of the British rock of that period. Bands were experimenting, and coming up with new ideas and new sounds. I guess in some ways, that's also what we're trying to do."

Indeed, it seems as if Wolfmother have hit upon the ultimate heavy metal dichotomy—making sounds as old as the rock form itself seem incredibly fresh and exciting. With their penchant for free-form jams, riff-heavy head trips and spacy instrumental excursions, throughout **Wolfmother**, this unit seems intent on bringing the time-tested vibe of classic "stoner" rock roaring into the 21st Century. But don't believe that these frizzy-haired dudes are purposefully trying to recapture a long-dormant aspect of the rock and roll lifestyle. Indeed, in the case of this time-cap-

the words that emanate out of Stockdale's mouth. And please don't get swept up in the notion think that this is some mindless, jacked-up metallic crew that perpetually needs to crank their amps to "11." While

tracks like

Dimension and *Woman* roar like the proverbial bat out of hell, others such as *White Unicorn* and *Where Eagles Have Been* showcase this unit's vivid imagination as well as their expansive instrumental skills.

"Not everything has to hit you right between the eyes," Stockdale said. "Some things need to set a tone for what comes next. That's one of the things we really worked on with these songs. We like the idea of having an acoustic guitar open a song and then have something really heavy come in. That contrast can be magical."

"WE'VE TAKEN OUR INFLUENCES AND BROUGHT OUR OWN STYLE TO THEM."

shift of monumental proportions; they decided to leave Australia and relocate in Los Angeles, where they soon set up shop at the famous (though by then almost abandoned) Cherokee Studios.

"Arriving in Los Angeles was a real culture shock for us," Stockdale said. "We had never been there before, and we didn't know where to go or what to do. But the record label proved to be very supportive and they got us situated at Cherokee, which they told us is where Pink Floyd had done a lot of work. That was all we needed to hear. We were totally inspired, and much of the music on this album came together in that very place."



WOLFMOTHER

HP

HELMET

IN FULL COLOR

BY STAN WINTERS

"I accepted my commercial fate a long time ago."

To a generation of in-the-know rockers, Helmet's Page Hamilton stands as one of the hard rock form's seminal figures. Despite almost always flying under the commercial radar, on a series of powerful, eminently unpredictable punk-meets-hardcore efforts, Hamilton's pioneering efforts have served to "wow" cutting edge members of the contemporary music community while continually confusing those with more pedestrian, mainstream tastes. The fact is, however, that even with the media and fan acclaim being heaped upon both Helmet's latest outing, **Monochrome**, and their headlining stint at last summer's Vans Warped Tour, Hamilton knows that after more than 15 years of slogging away in the rock underground, his status as a star to some, and unknown to many, isn't about to change.

"I accepted that fate long time ago," he said. "Thankfully, we've had a few moments when we've reached a wider audience, but that's never been a particular goal of mine. I've never been someone who's monitored the happenings in the music business. I couldn't tell you what's on MTV at the moment. It really doesn't interest me. I assume that an attitude like that hasn't had a beneficial impact on certain aspects of my career, but it's who I am. I'm not about to change. But I know that we've developed our following over the years, including a number of important people at the labels and in the media. Of course, that doesn't guarantee success— but it's nice to know that at least some people appreciate what we do."

With **Monochrome** signaling Helmet's return to the indie scene after a lengthy— and often successful— period of hopping from major to major, Hamilton apparently felt the time was right to return his unit (which now features guitarist Chris Traynor, bassist Jeremy Chatelain and drummer Mike Jost) to the pulsating, kinetic, highly intelligent sound that first brought the band acclaim on such landmark discs as **Strap It On** and the million-selling **Meantime**. Working once again with producer Wharton Tiers, who helmed those two previously mentioned discs, on such tracks as *Swallowing Everything*, *On Your Way Down* and *Almost Out of Sight*, Hamilton and his crew deliver the goods as only they can— lean, mean and ever-clever musical offerings that straddle the often fine lines that serve to separate metal from hardcore from punk. But as he looks back on his latest creation, Hamilton merely shrugs as if such creativity is all merely part of a good day's work.

"I'm very pleased with the way this album turned out," he said. "And having Wharton back on board to co-produce with me was a major help. Making music has always been very much a 'team' effort for me— it's not something I ever want to approach totally on my own. Not only can Wharton work wonders in the studio, he's also played a big part in the development of my guitar sound. That played a major factor in the way this album sounds."

With the continued development of Hamilton's already-legendary guitar style, there's no doubt that on their latest collection Helmet has taken their bone-crunching musical style in an even more unpredictable direction. The fact is that the music of Helmet exists apart from everything else currently inhabiting the rock scene, with the sounds contained on **Monochrome** harking back to the raw, savage power that first brought the band to public attention with their 1989 debut disc, **Strap It On**. In sound, manner and execution, Helmet's latest album bristles with a sonic intensity that perhaps no other band in the contemporary music sphere can match. While in the past the group's work has occasionally confused those fans weaned on more conventional hard rock fare, Hamilton believes that the more sophisticated and daring rock audiences of mid-2006 may finally be ready to embrace Helmet's far-reaching approach.

"This album does have a lot of diversity," he explained. "It boils down to developing a language that I started working with. The idea on this disc was to expand upon Helmet's language. We're not out to reinvent it; it's not about being eclectic or jumping on the marketplace's next big thing. I want to stay true to the reasons I got into music in the first place. I began doing this because I wanted to write songs and make the kind of music that I wanted to hear! That still motivates me. To me, it's all about making music— it's not about who you are, what your statement is, or how the album was made. For a lot of people who listen to music every day, there isn't a whole lot out there that resonates. I write a song because I like it, and not because I'm trying to make a lot of quick money. A lot of bands that come out of nowhere and put out records need to know the difference between creativity and careerism."

It's obvious that Hamilton has always placed his creative goals far in front of his more materialistic career aspirations. At certain times in the past such a philosophy has frustrated those who have worked with the band, believing that Hamilton's idealism, in particular, has limited the commercial impact that Helmet could make upon the rock scene. Forces at the band's record label reportedly asked the unit to "tone it down" on such past discs as **Meantime** and **Betty**, but true to their nature, Helmet stuck to their guns. To some extent Hamilton's unyielding nature was one of the key reasons that the group broke apart back in 1998 for a multi-year period. But now, with a refocused lineup and an ever-more ambitious attitude, it seems as if Hamilton is more determined than ever to keep doing things his way.

"There's still a lot more to be done in music," he said. "Every once in a while I hear a band that gives me hope and inspiration. I can listen to the first song on someone's new album, and perhaps I'll think that it's one of the most beautiful songs I've ever heard. Then I can listen to something totally different that inspires me just as much. That's what gets me excited about getting up in the morning— writing songs and making music. There might not be something 'new' per se, but there's always going to be someone to carry it on. I'd like to think Helmet is doing that as well."



PAGE HAMILTON

HP

LAYIN' IT ON THE LINE

BY WINSTON CUMMINGS

No one can ever say that Audioslave are a band content to rest on their sizable laurels. In the space of the four years that constitute their time together, this platinum-selling, arena-filling, award-winning, chart-topping hard rock unit—featuring former Soundgarden vocalist Chris Cornell, and ex-Rage Against The Machine members Tom Morello (guitar), Brad Wilk (drums) and Tim Commerford (bass)—has released no less than three studio albums, including their latest, **Revelations**. Toss in for good measure their 2005 **Live In Cuba** CD and DVD and what you have here is clearly one of the hardest working bands in the contemporary music biz. In an era when many top-shelf performers routinely take three or even four years between studio ventures, such productivity is not only laudable... it's downright incredible! Following as it does in the wake of this all-star band's self-titled 2003 debut and 2005's **Out of Exile**, **Revelations** takes this ever-unpredictable hard rock quartet into even more unexpected and exciting new directions.

"What I like about this album is that it's probably more true to our own individual tastes than anything we've done before," Morello said. "There is a lot of heavy guitar, pure hard rock in there, but there's also a number of very funky elements that give the music a flexibility that's very special. In fact, the whole album has a 'special' vibe to it."

Among the "special" elements that have made Morello so excited about **Revelations** is the fact the band recorded the disc in Los Angeles with the renowned Brendan O'Brien serving as their producer. Not only has O'Brien successfully teamed with Audioslave in the recent past, having mixed both **Out of Exile** and **Live In Cuba**, but his history with each and every one of the musicians involved goes back *much* further than that. O'Brien's impressive list of production accomplishments includes such Rage Against the Machine discs as **Evil Empire** and **Renegades**, as well as Soundgarden's **Superunknown**. Obviously the familiarity shared by everyone involved in Audioslave's new project allowed formalities to be quickly cast aside and just as rapidly replaced by a blue-collar, "get 'er done" attitude. And as seen on such tracks as *One And The Same*, *Until We Fall* and *Broken City*, that approach has yielded some magical results.

"Brendan knows us so well," Morello said. "That's why we knew we could get this album done rather quickly with him. We knew what we wanted to do, and our goal was to just go in and do it. We didn't want to fool around or be led around by anyone else's ideas. It worked out perfectly for us."

In a number of ways, this may well be the dawning of an exciting new day for Audioslave. With **Out of Exile** enjoying what might be best termed a "tepid" commercial response—at least in comparison to the sales frenzy that accompanied this unit's debut—**Revelations** stands as this unit's musical call-to-arms. With *Original Fire*, the lead track from their latest album, quickly emerging as one of the most heavily played tracks on rock radio stations across the nation, it seems as if the million-selling

successes enjoyed by this quartet on their previous two studio releases has only served as an appetizer for the "stand and deliver" attitude brought forth on **Revelations**. But by releasing so much music over a relatively short period of time, is Audioslave possibly running the risk of oversaturating the rock market? According to the ever-contemplative Morello, his band's unconventional approach to recording was *exactly* what Audioslave had in mind.

"We learned a lot with the first two albums," the guitarist said. "One of those things was to follow our instincts and another was to keep our mouths shut about what we were doing until the time was right. We like surprising people if we can—which is a tough thing to do these days. But with this album I think we've managed to do just that."

There's no question that on their third effort, Audioslave comes across as a more focused and cohesive unit than ever before. They even feel bold enough to venture briefly into the socially-conscious arena with the Hurricane Katrina-inspired ode *Wide Awake*. While on their previous albums the raw energy and charisma of the band's members seemed to carry the proceedings along at a break-neck pace, this time around the music seems to follow a more logical and somewhat more expansive pattern. Throughout **Revelations**, this unit still rocks with power and passion, but they also seem to do so with a less formulated and reserved nature. Quite simply, this time it seems like these four legendary rockers are truly enjoying themselves to the max!

"The spontaneity involved with the making of this music is what stands out for me," Morello said. "There wasn't as much careful planning and consideration—at least in terms of my playing. I thrived on going to our recording sessions and just jumping into it. We have so much confidence in one another now that we felt we could pull off that kind of approach."

As they prepare to hit the tour trail in support of their new disc, it seems as if Audioslave have finally come fully to grips with who and what they are—both as individuals and as a band. They know that it remains almost impossible for them to match the incredible expectations that so many have held for them since the moment of their inception back in 2002. But they also know that they may just be making the best music of their lives in 2006. Considering all that this fearless foursome have previously accomplished, that's saying a mouth-full.

"We've been very pleased by the way the fans have responded to everything we've done," Morello said. "Fans, the media, the people at the record label, all have certain expectations. Some are realistic... some are not. We've done a good job of trying to be the best band we can. I think we've made the best album of our lives. And by saying that I don't mean that it's superior to our other two albums, I mean that I believe it's better than anything that any of us have previously done, including Rage Against the Machine and Soundgarden. I know that some longtime fans might have some trouble with a statement like that, but I totally believe it."

"What I like about this album is that it's probably more true to our individual tastes than anything we've done before."



AUDIOSLAVE

HP

"A lot of bands may want to know how to party... we know!"

BY TOM LONG

You've got to admire any band that openly compares themselves to the likes of Guns 'N Roses, Aerosmith and AC/DC. Such bravado usually shows one of two things: either the band in question has an ego the size of Wisconsin... or they're pretty damn good at what they do. In the case of the New York City-based hard rock unit Dirty Rig, the root of their self-confident outburst probably lies somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. Yeah, this unit comprised of former Warrior Soul vocalist Kory Clarke, guitarist Chas, bassist Buckshot and drummer Dave Ardolina is not shy when it comes to touting both their talent and their rock and roll pedigree. But they've also got the musical goods to back it all up, a fact loudly and proudly proven throughout Dirty Rig's new disc, **Rock Did It**.

"We know what we are as a band," Chas said. "We like to drink some beer, have some fun and make some music. And you know what? We're pretty good at all of those things. A lot of bands may *want* to know how to party, and *want* to know how to rock, but not that many really do. Count us among the lucky ones."

Aside from their brimming self-confidence, and their ability to lay down some mighty impressive hard rockin' riffs, perhaps the most note-worthy element sur-

rounding Dirty Rig is the inclusion of Clarke. Long one of heavy metal's "underground heroes" during his lengthy and occasionally headline-grabbing stint with the aforementioned Warrior Soul, in this unit his unique vocal stylings and classic frontman "preenings" are given a new place to shine. As shown on such songs as *Rock Did It*, *Drunk Again* and *Hot Porno Star*, Clarke and his bandmates leave little to the imagination, continually delivering the kind of no-holds-barred, mind-in-the-gutter rock and roll that has been out of style since 1989. But do these guys care that their sound is as dated as feathered hair? What do you think!

"I don't understand people who say the way you look or the way you sound needs to be relegated to a particular period in time," Clarke said. "Either you like rock and roll, and appreciate rock and roll, or you don't. It's really that simple. We're a band that not only understands the fundamental ingredients needed to be a great band—we live those ingredients every hour of every day."

It's taken the members of Dirty Rig three years of hard work to reach their current lot in rock and roll life. Back in 2003, Chas, Buckshot and Ardolina teamed with original vocalist Ed Sebastian, and it was

that lineup which a year later recorded the group's debut disc, **Blood, Sweat and Beer Makes America Strong**. But by 2005 noticeable gaps started to appear within the group's internal alignment—a fact highlighted by Sebastian not showing up for a major New Jersey gig that summer. So without a singer, Dirty Rig realized that their brief time in the rock and roll spotlight might be drawing to a quick and premature close. But one night a few months later, Buckshot happened to spot Clarke who was performing in a Big Apple club with a revamped Warrior Soul lineup... and apparently not enjoying it very much. After a brief meeting, and the dissection of Dirty Rig's new demo tapes, Clarke decided to jump ship and get back to playing the kind of down-'n-dirty hard rock that had long been his favorite.

"I guess it was a case of just all of us being in the right place," he said. "I don't know if I was necessarily looking for a band like this to come along, but when I heard what they were up to, I knew that I had to be part of it. Everyone in this band is a true rock and roll animal; there aren't too many of us around at the moment. We may be a dying breed, but I can promise that if we have to go, we'll go out kickin' and screamin' at the top of our lungs."

PHOTO: FRANK WHITE

DIRTY RIG

CLEANING UP THEIR ACT

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IRON MAIDEN

BY TED PARKER

DEATH FIXATION

"We knew that we wanted to keep these tracks raw and vital."

The last year hasn't exactly been the easiest time in Iron Maiden's long and illustrious career. First came the nasty egg-throwing, name-calling cat fight that erupted between Bruce Dickinson and Sharon

Osbourne, a "war" which emphatically punctuated this London-based heavy metal unit's departure from last year's *Ozzfest*. Then came the various business setbacks encountered in early 2006 by the band's parent company, Sanctuary Music, which placed an unexpected burden upon this group's collective shoulders just as they needed to begin focusing their creative energies on the completion of a new album. Indeed, in recent days, it's sometimes seemed that for every step they took forward, the legendary Maiden Metal Machine was forced to take an equal step back... or at least to do a little *side-ways* shuffle. After all, as Dickinson is so fond of saying, "Much like England itself, we don't step back from anyone, or anything!"

But now with **A Matter of Life & Death**, their first album of new material in nearly three years, racing up the charts, and a typically massive Maiden world-wide invasion set to begin, it seems as if everything is once again back-to-normal in the kingdom of Dickinson and his bandmates—bassist Steve Harris, drummer Nicko McBrain and guitarists Janeck Gers, Dave Murray and Adrian Smith. Sure, Sanctuary may still face an unpredictable future, and it will probably be a cold day in Hades before Bruce and Sharon sit down for a spot of tea, but when push-comes-to-shove, Maiden's new music rocks with the kind of power, passion and purpose that only this pedal-to-the-metal unit can seemingly muster... and, come to think about it, isn't that all that really matters?

"All the fans want to know about is what's happening with our music, don't you think?" Dickinson asked. "All those other things are not very relevant to them. So let's talk about this album. From the very beginning of our sessions we knew that we wanted to keep the tracks raw and vital because we didn't want to run the risk of having them become too sanitized during the studio process.

What we accomplish in the studio over a number of days often takes weeks or more to unravel. And during that time things get fixed up. Adrian gets called in: 'Hey listen, we can't find a section for this bit of your guitar. Can you come in and just do that little bit again?' And when we do those, we bring in all three guitarists. And they all go into the room and for the overdubs everybody's all playing together. So it doesn't sound like an overdub. And when all that is completed, then I come in and go, 'Time for pain and suffering... time for vocals!'"

With the results of their new studio disc now delighting metal fans around the globe, it would appear as if Maiden are about the embark upon one of the busiest times of their musical lives. With demand for their in-con-

Maiden to suddenly start going: 'Oh yeah, we need to start rapping, we need to get into that hip-hop thing.' You want the Rolling Stones to start sounding like Trent Reznor? Why? It's a Rolling Stones album, stupid! In the same fashion, it's an Iron Maiden album, stupid!"

There's no question that these days Dickinson seems to have a bit of a chip on his shoulder—which, in actuality, is nothing new for this erudite, pint-sized powerhouse who has never been shy about expressing his opinions on virtually any subject tossed in his general direction. But this time around things seem to be a little different in and around the Maiden camp. While throughout their career they've often been forced to play a secondary role in the minds of the metal masses to the likes of Sabbath, Zeppelin, AC/DC and even Priest, in 2006 this amp-busting sextet isn't about to take a back seat to anyone! Maiden know that they now rank among the true all-time metal elite, and they're certainly not ashamed to admit it.

"Saying that we've helped shape the entire metal style is truly a compliment of the highest order," Dickinson said.

"And, come to think of it, it's true! It's all the more reason for us staying just as we are, because obviously we're doing something right. If we're influencing all these young bands and they're coming out of the woodwork saying how great we are, then I feel what we've been doing for the last 25 years is being fully appreciated. Back in the '80s when metal was thought of as being Ratt, and Poison, and Motley Crue, and all that kind of stuff, Maiden was perceived as being heavier than heavy. There was nothing in the rock and roll mainstream heavier than Maiden. And at the same time we were outsiders. We were never as popular on the magazine covers and things like that, especially in America. We weren't featured as much as the pretty-boy bands. And that was great because we're not interested in super-models, and we're not interested in getting wasted in public, and all that crap. Maiden has more in common with a sports team than it does with being rock stars. We were outsiders in the '80s. We were outsiders in the '90s, and we're still outsiders in 2006."

"Saying that we've helped shape the entire metal style is truly a compliment of the highest order."

cert services coming in—as always—from all corners of the globe, and a new generation of bands ready, willing and able to pay homage to these Founding Fathers of the Metal Sound, more than 25 years into their historic career it seems as if some exciting new chapters in the Maiden legacy still remain to be written. And the ever-feisty Dickinson, for one, can't wait to see what unexpected twists and turns that story still has in store for he and his bandmates during the months to come.

"It's nice that everyone seems to be on our side at the moment," he said. "But don't try to fool me. It's great that everybody has suddenly had this conversion like St. Paul on the road to Damascus: 'We were into Maiden all along!' Well, for a long time a lot of them were resistant—they had their pop-metal, rap-metal or grunge-metal favorites. They didn't rally to us in the same fashion. We've always been almost a cult band—even if at times it has been a rather impressive cult. But all that is in the past. As long as people buy Maiden's albums and they love 'em, that's great. There's no reason whatsoever for



BRUCE DICKINSON

HP

Corey Taylor knew it was rather inevitable that sooner or later he'd become the face, the voice and the image of Stone Sour. After all, even before this Des Moines-based hard rock unit hit the top of the charts back in 2003 thanks to their platinum-selling debut disc, Taylor had already enjoyed another major claim-to-fame as the frontman for those legendary merchants of metallic mayhem better known as Slipknot. But as much as he enjoys his role in Stone Sour — a band whose second disc, *Come What(ever) May* has already proven to be a chart-topping sensation — Taylor wants it known that this is very much a *band*, not a one-man operation. And, indeed, throughout Stone Sour's sophomore effort the work of Taylor's bandmates — guitarist James Root, (his co-worker in Slipknot), bassist Shawn Economaki, guitarist Josh Rand and new drummer Roy Mayorga

BY RYAN HARDING

STONE SOUR MAKING THEIR MARK

"This is a band in every sense of the word."

— shine through like never before. "This is a band in every sense of the word," Taylor said. "Since we've all known each other for years, there's no holding back when it comes to sharing ideas and offering a little criticism. It's all very open and very honest — just like the music. In this band I've been able to blend into the background if needed. You grow up thinking being recognized all the time will be sweet, but sometimes you just want to be one of the guys. I think I balance it fairly well."

Having first gotten together under the Stone Sour name way back in 1995, it seems logical that the members of this power-packed unit would share more than the "traditional" musical bond. And with all hailing from the "wilds" of Iowa, their geographical link also provides the SS crew with a sense of unity that transports them beyond any sensation of being merely the "backing band" for their illustrious vocalist. Despite losing original drummer, Joel Ekman, just prior to the recording of *Come What(ever) May*, there's no question that in 2006 Taylor and his crew are more focused, more determined and more committed than ever to making sure that their band leaves a permanent impression upon the rock and roll world.

"With Stone Sour, I loosen up and show more of myself," Taylor said. "As fans have heard on this new record, it's different than anything that we have ever done. It gives me a chance to do the singing that I love to do, the type of singing that I do when I'm walking around my house."

Of course, Taylor is the first to acknowledge that no matter what he may accomplish with Stone Sour, in the minds of many of his followers this group will forever remain his

"other" band — a group destined to perpetually live in the foreboding shadow cast by the inimitable Slipknot. So what if *Bother* from Stone Sour's Grammy-nominated, self-titled debut disc became one of 2003's most off-played radio tracks. And what's the big deal if new SS songs like *30/30-150*, *Hell & Consequences* and *Through Glass* rank among the most noteworthy achievements of Taylor's career. All some fans want to know is when is he returning to the Knot?

"I'm used to that by now," he said. "I know how devoted Slipknot's fans are, and how loyal they are to the band. I love that. But I think most of them have grown to appreciate this band, as well. They know Stone Sour isn't Slipknot, and that it's not supposed to be. They know that when the time is right, we'll get the Knot going again... but that time isn't now."

To anyone with ears it's easy to spot the myriad musical differences that separate Slipknot and Stone Sour... they're as apparent as the mask that's *not* on Taylor's face! While the Knot thrives on intensity, darkness and an almost uncontrollable degree of manic frenzy, Stone Sour's musical call-to-arms is far more melodic... though no less intense. But don't think you can quickly and easily pigeon-hole Stone Sour as just another "melodic metal" or radio-ready hard rock act. The fact is, the deeper you delve into the contents of *Come What(ever) May*, the more astounded you end up being, thanks to the incredible diversity displayed on songs such as *Socio*, *Made of Scars* and *Zzyzx Rd.*

"Too many bands are so genre-specific these days," Taylor said. "You've got your heavy metal bands, and your rap-metal bands, and your pop bands, and whatever

But it seems like there are no bands that cover the middle ground. If they try, their music usually sounds lifeless and limp. Our album has such a pulse. The cool thing is that when we write stuff, it turns out catchy whether we want it to or not. It's just something that we do."

There's no doubt that Stone Sour have now begun to put their indelible stamp on the contemporary music kingdom. And as the band hits the road to support their latest release, Taylor is psyched by the notion that his unit now has two complete discs (plus a few extra bonus tracks) to feature in their live set. He knows that as he hits the tour trail he'll probably confront a few fans who want him to quickly scurry back to the "safe" confines of Slipknot. And he's aware that he'll invariably come face-to-face with a few media types who fail to understand the depth and sincerity of his commitment. But you know what? He really doesn't give a damn!

"I've lost a little sleep over the fact that people don't get what I do and how I do it," he said. "I do everything I can to entertain, educate and infuriate the status quo. If I give the mainstream a headache once in a while, that works for me. I have a conscience that comes out in most of these songs. I have a respect for the music and I have an agenda. I have an individualistic mind to botch the 'product' mentality, and I am not out to further myself in a spotlight that knows no favorites. This could all be gone tomorrow. If all you're doing is trying to build your Q points, what are you going to do when no one wants to see you anymore? At least I'll be happy about the music I left behind."



STONE SOUR

HP
















































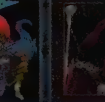






































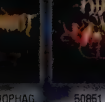








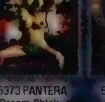




















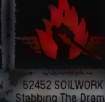
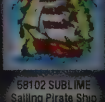



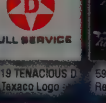

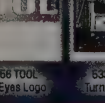








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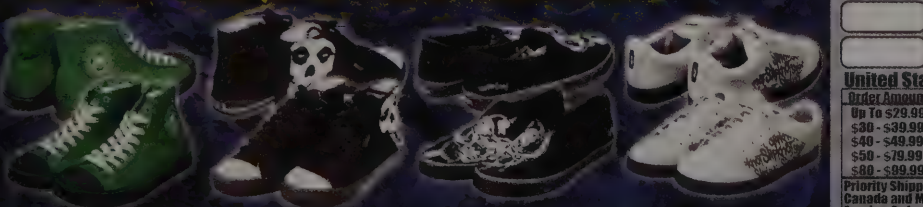
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Eighteen Visions Seeing Straight

BY P.J. MERKLE

James Hart, the charismatic vocalist for fast-rising So Cal emo-metal band Eighteen Visions likes to talk. Given the proper chance, he'll happily yap about himself, his band, his band's self-titled new album, the weather, or just about any other subject you might choose to throw up. But there's a good reason for Hart's loquacious personality these days... after a decade of struggle, with the success of 18V's self-titled new album (and major label debut), Hart and his bandmates — guitarist Keith Barney, guitarist Ken Floyd, vocalist Jamey Hart, bassist Mick Morris and drummer Trevor Friedrich — appear ready to take their rightful position at the very apex of the heavy music world. Following the inroads made by their 2004 effort *Obsession*, this time around the 18V gang have up their musical quotient of both instantly memorable melody as well as rib-sticking power. Together these two elements have helped forge the foundation of a sound that seems destined to turn these Orange County upstarts into a major rock and roll force.

Hit Parader: A lot of people look at Eighteen Visions as a new face on the hard rock playing field. But you've been at this for a long time.
James Hart: Yeah, we've been around since 1995—at least Ken and I have been at it since then. We went through a variety of other guys before this band really started to come together. But it doesn't seem like it's been more than ten years—there's always been enough progress to keep us focused and interested. I can't think of too many times when we felt totally frustrated by what was going on with us.

HP: You've been part of the so-called Orange County Metal Movement, which has also spawned the likes of Atreyu, Bleeding Through and Avenged Sevenfold. Was that a very competitive scene?

JH: I think we were more supportive of each other than anything else. We all were playing various kinds of heavy rock—from hardcore to metal—at a time when that kind of music wasn't being generally embraced. But we knew that if we kept at it, and continued to grow, the pendulum would eventually start to swing back in our direction, and it clearly has.

HP: After having a number of albums out, why did you decide to call this one *Eighteen Visions*?

JH: Because in many ways this is the album we've always wanted to do. It's also our first major label album, so in some ways it's an introduction to what we hope will be a wider audience. We've evolved so much over the last few years, and we're very pleased with where we've ended up. For us, the key point is that this is the first album we've done where we felt it deserved to have our name as the title. That's how proud we are of it. We've all grown up and realized the full potential that we have. If anyone thought they had us figured out from the last album, or even the things we had done before that, then they'd better think again. In some ways we're like a new band; don't

confuse us with the group you may have seen or heard two years ago.

HP: Why did you change things so radically after the success of *Obsession*?

JH: It was one of those things that just happened. We're not saying that we don't like the last album, because we do. But when we went back and listened to that one we realized that while there were a lot of things that we liked, we needed to push everything to the next level. We wanted to make everything sounded huge—and that meant make the melodies better, the hooks

We've evolved so much over the last few years, and we're very pleased with where we've ended up.

bigger and the energy more powerful. We think we pulled it off rather well.

HP: Are you concerned that while you may expand your audience with *Eighteen Visions*, you may leave some long-time fans behind?

JH: I don't think the shift is that radical, or that surprising. I mean if you go back and listen to our first album (*Until the Ink Runs Out*), which sounds a lot more hardcore than this one, then maybe you would hear a very different band. But this is the direction we've been heading in over the last few years and the last few albums. It's not a total shift in direction. The fans who've been with us for a while will definitely not be thrown off. And if it does bring in a few new fans, then that's a major benefit. One of the attitudes we had when we started writing for this album was that we'd consider everything that came our way—it didn't matter if it initially sounded like Cannibal Corpse or the Goo Goo Dolls. They all deserved consideration.

HP: Some people may say that 18V "sold out

once they got to a major label.

JH: And they'd be totally wrong if they did think that. This was the direction we wanted to go. There have been a lot of bands, like Stone Temple Pilots, Soundgarden and even Def Leppard, who managed to inject a lot of melody into their songs while keeping a bit of a cutting edge. That's what our goal has been on this album. We're never going to be confused with any sort of "mainstream" band, but at the same time we wanted our music to be accessible to as many people as possible.

HP: The first single for the album, *Tonightless*, has been enjoying an incredible response. Tell us what you're hearing about it.

JH: Actually, that one dates back to the time when we were finishing up the recording of *Obsession*. We knew it was a great song, but we just didn't

need another track on that album. We knew it was interesting, but it wasn't something we were thinking about at the time. But when we started gathering material for *Eighteen Visions*, Ken said, "Hey, how about *Tonightless*?" We had forgotten about it, but obviously he hadn't. It's a great song about loneliness, and it really captures what we're trying to do on this album.

HP: You've been on the road a lot. The band recently toured with Avenged Sevenfold and Limp Bizkit. How have the fans been accepting your new material?

JH: Our fans have always been pretty understanding and open. I'm sure there are a few who are wondering what's gotten into us, but for the most part they've been very supportive. Live, the people have responded very well to the new material. We've been playing a lot of the songs on this album when we get on stage, so we're kind of shoving it down their throats... but nobody seems to mind.



EIGHTEEN VISIONS

HP

Shaun Morgan takes his music very seriously. A determined look of introspection crosses the face of Seether's long-haired frontman whenever he's confronted with a particularly pithy query concerning this South African unit's rock and roll production. Thus, when we recently confronted him concerning the contents of the band's new all-acoustic DVD/CD release *One Cold Night*, Morgan took an extra micro-second to pause and consider the possible permutations, interpretations and hidden meanings housed behind each and every one of our probing questions. But perhaps Morgan and his bandmates—bassist Dale Stewart, guitarist Pat Callahan and drummer John Humphrey—have good reason to delve into the depths of their musical souls. After all, despite the across-the-board acclaim heaped upon both the band's 2003 break-out disc *Disclaimer*, and its 2005 follow-up, *Karma & Effect*, Seether have drawn constant critical kudos for the sincerity and intelligence housed within their slices of metallic magic. So when the band decided to take such a radical left turn so early in their career by recreating many of their best-known "heavy" songs—including *Broken* and *Remedy*—in a strictly acoustic environment, we knew we had to hook up with the contemplative Mr. Morgan in order to get some "serious" answers.

SEETHER

ALL FIRED UP

BY PETE SLATER

Hit Parader: What was the logic behind releasing an album like *One Cold Night* at this point in the band's career?

Shaun Morgan: It was something that just sort of happened. We played a number of acoustic sets during the last tour, and we realized that this was something interesting... something important for the fans to hear. It brought out a totally different side to our music, but a side that we felt was equally significant to the more "rock" side of what we do. Thanks to the success of our albums, we've often found ourselves performing in big halls and arenas, and any hope for intimacy is lost in that kind of environment. That's why we decided to play a few of these "special" acoustic shows in more intimate places, so that we could better connect with the fans and they could better connect with our music.

HP: You recorded the album at Grape Street, a club in Philadelphia. Was there any special reason you chose that particular show?

SM: Actually, there is. It's a nice venue—perfect for what we were trying to do. But it also is a place that holds special significance for this band because it's where Dale and I first encountered Pat. So it was kind of like returning home for us, and there was a very warm, familial vibe throughout the entire show.

HP: Do you envision the "acoustic" side of Seether becoming more prominent in the years ahead?

SM: On albums, I imagine that we'll continue doing things in much the same way as we have in the past. But what I'd like us to do is try and play two dates in cities when we're on tour. The first night will be our regular rock show. The second night would be our acoustic set. I think that would appeal to our fans, and make it very interesting for us as well. It may sound rather ambitious, but I think we could do that quite well.

HP: Were there any songs that presented a particular problem when you converted them from "heavy" to "acoustic"?

SM: Not really. Most of the songs we do were probably written on an acoustic guitar in the first place, so it's kind of taking them back to their roots. But it's interesting to hear how some of our heavier things, like *Gasoline* and *Truth* work in that environment. They're quite different... yet just as powerful.

HP: You mention writing on an acoustic guitar. Give us a little insight into your creative process.

SM: Sometimes writing a song is as easy as sitting down in the back of the tour bus with a guitar and recording something in the span of 10 minutes. Other times, it can become a true labor to get everything to fit exactly the way you want it to. There isn't one way or another that works better.

HP: Are you pleased by Seether's position in the rock world of 2006?

SM: I would have to say that all things considered, I am very pleased. We've grown a great deal as a band and I feel we're now headed in the true direction that we want to travel. There's that natural growing process which every group needs to go through... and trust me, we did! But in the end, we've solidified ourselves into the four-piece band you hear today.

HP: To your way of thinking, what separates Seether from most of the other bands on the hard-rock block?

SM: I would think that it's our willingness to experiment and take chances, which of course, is one of the reasons we've done a disc like *One Cold Night*. A lot of the music I hear today is following a rather conventional verse-chorus-verse formula, and while we do that too on occasion, we like to play around with song structures, and the timing in which the songs are played, and that yields some very interesting results.


HP: You've been a critical favorite as well as a commercial success. What's more important to you?

SM: We've been critical favorites? I thought they hated us! (Laughs) I read some of the recent reviews and they've rarely been complimentary—though, I must say, that it seems that they've been a bit kinder to this album. But I rather expected some of the negative response we've had over the years. I never really worry about how anyone else may react to us. I know it sounds a little self-centered, but the attitude we bring to our music is that if we're happy with what we create, then it'll be good enough because we are by-far our own harshest critics.

HP: You've been understandably proud of your South African roots, but has being based in America for more time changed any of your cultural perspectives?

SM: Not really. I've always joked that South Africa is the 51st State. But there is a different outlook on life over there... one that is a lot more laid back. I like having a little more up-tempo feel around me, especially in a city like New York. New York can kick you in the ass a bit. It gets you away from your comfort level. I live in a big house in L.A., and you need to get away from that to get a little rawness involved. But then you can turn that around in your music from time to time. I appreciate that challenge.

"MOST OF THE SONGS WE DO WERE PROBABLY WRITTEN ON AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR."



MESA/BOOGIE
The Spirit of Art in Technology

SHAUN MORGAN

HP

"WE'VE NEVER LACKED CONFIDENCE, SO WE CAN HANDLE WHATEVER PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US."

Every revolution needs a leader. Whether it be political, cultural or musical, the fact is that every movement-of-note requires at least one truly inspirational force to propel it from being merely an interesting phenomenon into something that may contain at least a smidgen of true historical import. These days, as the latest heavy metal "revolution" begins to take shape, the rock and roll world is searching near-and-far to find that single "cosmic" force, that one great band that can help catapult this musical uprising into something truly special.

blending of hard-core, metal, punk, Goth and pop elements has served to enrage just as many fans as it has enthralled, the members of A7X seem to be enjoying every step along their bumpy ride to the top of the contemporary music world.

"We've never been the kind of band that's avoided shaking things up," Vengeance said. "We combine a lot of different influences and styles into what we do. You can't just dismiss us as a metal band or a punk band or a Goth band. There's just as much Bad Religion in what we do as Painter or Iron Maiden. That's what pisses some people off. They want to be

cause. Could things get any better for A7X?

"What's really rewarding is that the fans who've been with us from the very beginning are still there enjoying it all with us," Vengeance said. "We have nothing against anyone who may have jumped on board after hearing this album or seeing us at *Ozzfest*—that's why we're on a major label and why we did that tour. But we're most excited about sharing all the good stuff that's going on with those core fans who've been hanging around since the beginning. They're the ones who know just how much all of this means to us."

If truth be known, there were many within

SURVIVING THE HYPE AVENGED SEVENFOLD

Can today's metal action possibly match the cultural impact enjoyed by such past rock and roll landmarks as the New Wave of British Heavy Metal of 1981, the West Coast Metal Explosion of 1983, the Grunge Groundswell of 1990, and the New Metal Movement of 1994? That, of course, remains to be

seen. But to the eyes and ears of many followers of the Hard Rock Revolution of 2006, the band required to lead metal's latest charge up the rock and roll mountain may have already been found.... and their name is Avenged Sevenfold.

"Wow, that's an amazing concept," said guitarist Zany Vengeance. "I don't think any of us have even begun to consider anything like that. We've never lacked confidence, but it's kind of hard to look at yourself in that way. We've heard when people have compared us to some very interesting bands from the past, but we've usually rejected that. We're Avenged Sevenfold... that's good enough for us."

Good enough, indeed. In fact, for Vengeance and his bantams—vocalist M. Shadows, guitarist Sinister Gates, drummer the Reverend and bassists John Christ—the recent avalanche of accolades that has accompanied the success of their latest release, *City of Evil*, has been far from a total surprise. After all, ever since their formation in 1998, this Orange County, CA metal unit has been drawing more than their share of attention—both good and bad—from those who view this acid-tongued, surprisingly accessible hard rock unit as the Next Big Step in hard rock's evolutionary development. And while their unique

able to label us and categorize us, and they can't do it. The fans love us because of that. There's also a darkness there—kind of a Goth thing. We've always had that in our music, but maybe it's become a little more prevalent on this album. It has nothing to do with how we feel as people or how successful we may become. That's a feeling that's deep inside all of us and it's probably never going to go away."

In many ways, Avenged Sevenfold seem like they've been able to summarize just about every hard rock style of the last 30 years in one neat, concise, mind-melting musical package. Yet, after six years of relative struggle, these So Cal rockers suddenly find themselves ranked as the hottest young hard rock band in the world. *City of Evil* stands as their platinum-selling major label debut—following the path first blazed by such past "Indie" success stories as *Sounding the Seventh Trumpet* and *Waking the Fallen*. Their tours—including their recent CO-headlining stint at *Ozzfest*—have created an instant sensation wherever this quixotic quintet have decided to plug in their array of over-aped instruments. And their ever-expanding media profile has cast them as the cover-boy lightning rods for the Century hard rock

A7X's core fan-base who were deeply troubled by the group's decision in 2005 to sign with giant Warner Bros. Records for the release of *City of Evil*. They feared that the band's free-wheeling, nothing-is-sacred style

would be deeply corrupted by the major label "suits" who run the group's new label. But in stark contrast to such concerns, throughout their new disc A7X

has continually proven that the additional funds, visibility and support supplied by a "major" is just what they required in order to create their "ultimate" musical statement. On songs such as *Beast and the Harlot*, *Bat Country* and *Burn it Down*, this power-packed crew have proven that they have the talent, the smarts and the creative vision required to lead the hard rock kingdom directly to the Promised Land.

"There's definitely a degree of freedom and confidence associated with being on a major that we never had before," Vengeance said. "But once we all get together and start making music, we still go back to the basic things that got us turned on to rock and roll in the first place. We were ready to sign with a major label when the opportunity came. We've never pushed anything in our career or let anything that's happened to us take away from our focus. That's why we're trying not to let what's happening now get to us. We want to keep making the kind of music we've always made without feeling that we're selling out to fame—or increased media attention—in any way. We seem like we're a lightning rod for criticism like that. Some people feel that we're the new voice of hard rock... and others feel that we've had to sell out some of our basic beliefs to get where we are. Hey, I guess everyone is entitled to their opinion!"



A7X

HP

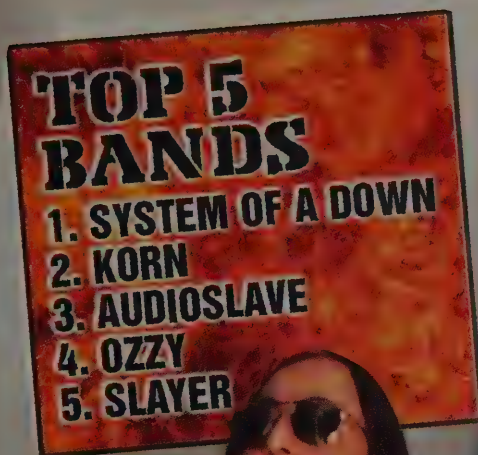
THE YEAR in METAL 2006

BY ROB ANDREWS

2006 is fast drawing to a close. Another incredible year in heavy metal history is about to pull the curtain and take a well-deserved bow. Quite simply, it was a great year for hard rock... a time when returning heroes amped up along-side determined upstarts— with all providing fans a bonanza of ear-blasting thrills and chills along the way.

So what were the Big Stories of the Heavy Metal World in 2006? The fact is that there were almost too many to remember! The headliner-grabbers included the flood of summer-long tours such as *Ozzfest*, *Unholy Alliance*, *Family Values* and *Gigantour* that saw the likes of Ozzy, Slayer, Korn, Stone Sour, Megadeth and System of a Down rock the nation from stem-to-stern. They also included the chart-topping returns of bands as diverse as Tool, Iron Maiden and Slayer, each of whom produced new albums of amazing depth, power and quality. And let's not forget the never-ending wait for new discs from Metallica and AC/DC— as well as the corresponding rumors surrounding their oft-delayed release. And last, but certainly not least, upstarts like Wolfmother, Avenged Sevenfold, Mastodon and Lamb of God provided a fresh approach to the metal cause, simultaneously saluting rock's past while blazing a path for the form's future. There you have it... the Metal Story of 2006 in less than 100 words...but who's counting?





SYSTEM OF A DOWN



DISTURBED



In all honesty, it's not our job to summarize events as important as these in just a few words. It's our editorial calling to wallow in the intricacies of each and every one of these important musical happenings and translate their inner-meaning and societal impact for millions around the globe. And trust us when we tell you, we take such a responsibility very seriously. So much happened in 2006 that it might well take us a decade to properly disseminate everything that occurred over the last year. Indeed, the previous 12 months may well go down among the most notable, exciting and enjoyable periods in the history of the hard rock form.

Just a few years after so many mainstream media pundits had proclaimed that heavy metal was virtually dead as a major commercial and artistic force, the style proved to be not only alive, but one of the most vibrant musical forces on earth. In '06 such stellar attractions as Audioslave, Rob Zombie, Godsmack and Staind further established their chart-topping, arena-filling credentials, with their actions serving to solidify hard rock's hold on the collective hearts and minds of the rock and roll masses. At the same time, veteran acts like Megadeth, Iron Maiden/Motorhead and Slayer returned to the metal world, doing the musical voodoo that they do so well to the tune of best-selling albums and sold-out tours. From rising upstarts to gilded veterans, 2006 was the year when everyone, everywhere once again proudly put the pedal to the metal!

"We've been doing this for more than two decades, and we've noticed some definite trends starting to happen," said Slayer's bassist/vocalist Tom Araya. "Metal is definitely coming back strong, and perhaps the best part is that the bands who are playing it these days have definitely developed their own approach to it. That's why we enjoyed doing our *Unholy Alliance* tour with Lamb of God and Mastodon. They're both very heavy, but they're both totally different. They represent this form's future."

There's no question that the general perception held by the world's populace concerning the 2006 metal empire was that it was a form in the midst of transition. Long gone were the "standard" metal trademarks of long hair, tight jeans and seemingly endless guitar solos. In their stead were shaven heads, coveralls and six-string riffs heavy enough to sink a battleship. Yes, there's no question that as the 21st Century hit its sixth year, the face, attitude and ambition of the hard rock world had taken a definite turn in a more intense and unpredictable direction. "Underground" bands such as Hatebreed, Unearth, Killswitch Engage and Cradle of Filth made their stand, proving to one and all that metal had many exciting new faces to show an ever-more demanding public. Their trade was plied with angst and aggression, but these on-the-rise units found an audience that ate up all that they could deliver. And despite the inherent anger and intensity that fueled so many of the year's top hard rock releases, that attitude seemed to have little negative impact on the form's commercial success. In fact, more than 30 million metal-oriented albums were sold world-wide during '06, an amazing figure in anyone's book.

Before anyone thinks that it was just metal's young lions who were leading this commercial charge, however, let it be said that metal's legendary forces also helped pave the way for this year's historic impact on the rock scene. While the likes of Korn continued on their seemingly never-ending touring cycle, timeless hard rock forces such as Iron Maiden and Aerosmith continued to prove that they had what it took to amaze a new generation of fans—virtually all of whom weren't even born when those bands first scored major acclaim decades ago.

"We just keep on keepin' on," said Aero vocalist Steven Tyler, who overcame throat problems in order to return to the road, and begin recording the band's new album. "What worked a long time ago still works now, as long as you have the chops to back it all up."

Who in their right mind could possibly have imagined the size and shape of this latest metal invasion back in the mousse-abusing '80s, the grunge-filled '90s or even the alterna-rocking early part of this decade. Not only are today's conquering metal heroes international in scope, and incredibly varied in appearance, background and influences, but many of them have effectively man.

TOP 5 ALBUMS

1. SLAYER, *CHRIST ILLUSION*
2. IRON MAIDEN, *A MATTER OF LIFE & DEATH*
3. TOOL, *10,000 DAYS*
4. STONE SOUR, *COME WHAT(EVER) MAY*
5. WOLFmother, *WOLFmother*

TOP 5 TOURS

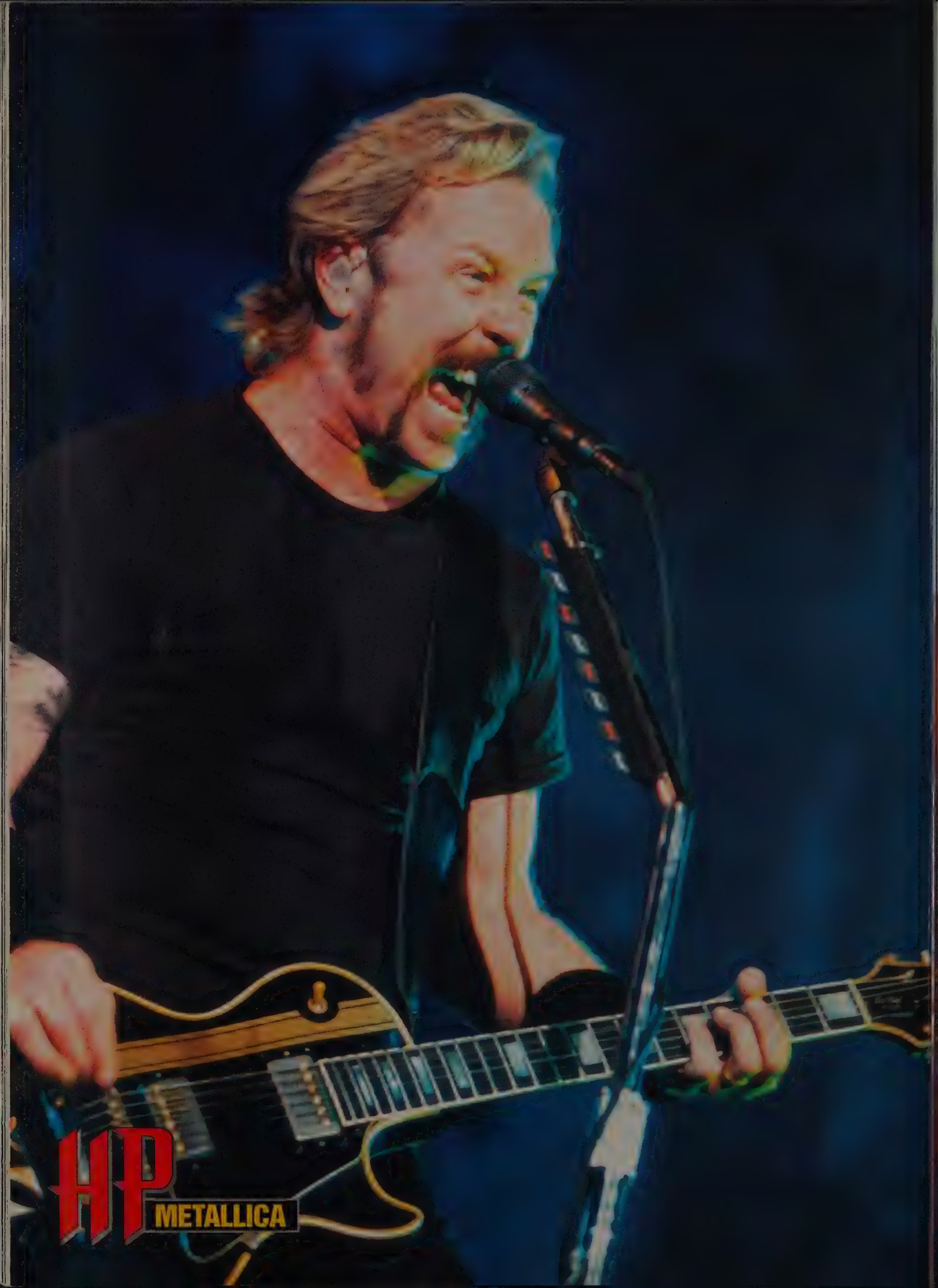
1. UNHOLY ALLIANCE
2. FAMILY VALUES
3. OZZFEST
4. TOOL
5. GIGANTOUR

TOP 5 "BREAKOUT" BANDS

1. WOLFmother
2. MASTODON
3. LACUNA COIL
4. EIGHTEEN VISIONS
5. BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE



KORN **HP**



HP
METALLICA

"wheel"—a task that few industry observers thought could ever be done again. From the impassioned cries of Italy's Lacuna Coil (fronted by the beautiful Cristina Scabbia) to the retro-rock sounds spawned by Australia's Wolfmother, to the theatrical punk-meets-metal approach used by America's own AFI, this year's hard rock form was a veritable bastion of both contrast and bombast.

Clearly, there's no way of denying the major impact that the heavy metal form has had on the contemporary music world in 2006. Everywhere you look and everywhere you go, the sounds and styles of today's top hard rock attractions are there to meet you eye-to-eye. Whether it was the horrific lyrical and physical images put forth by Slipknot (whose haunting aura hung heavily over 2006... despite the Nine Man Mutant Metal Army enjoying a well-deserved hiatus), or the powerfully impassioned words escaping from the chart-topping songs of Breaking Benjamin, today's hard rock music is more varied, vibrant and vital than ever before. It makes us all anxious for 2007 to begin just so we can discover what's gonna happen next!

"For so long metal was a very predictable form," said an East Coast radio personality. "Now it's not. You pick up a metal album these days, and you really have no idea in what direction that band may go. That's amazing. That's wonderful. That's heavy metal in 2006."

Indeed, 2006 will long be remembered by some observers as the year that heavy metal made its triumphant "return" into the psyche of the world's musical masses. Of course, those of us in-the-know will seriously question exactly where those observers felt the metal form was returning from. Sure, the efforts of high profile bands like Audioslave, Maiden, Godsmack and System of a Down cast the form squarely in the spotlight by making chart-topping displays in '06. But there was more to metal's triumphant rise than that—much more.

The indisputable, undeniable fact is that no matter what some under-informed, part-time observers of the contemporary music

DEFTONES



"Bands playing metal these days have definitely developed their own approach to it."

scene may state, heavy metal has *never* been away! Indeed, the form culminated what has proven to be a string of highly successful campaigns by enjoying one of its strongest years ever in 2006. During that time, both

established superstars and young upstarts made their loud and proud presence felt... time and time again. But all of that varied-yet-notable success was merely the culmination of a growth process that follows the natural ebbs and flows of the rock and roll world. It's just that in '06 it appeared as if many of the form's stars were in high-profile form, making many members of the mainstream media once again sit up and take notice.

"It's always very amusing when I hear people say how hard rock is making a comeback," said Audioslave's Tom Morello. "All that tells me is that they've not followed what's been happening in music very closely. They're caught up in what's trendy rather than with what's good."

As the high-profile likes of Mudvayne, Stone Sour and Staind made their big-time mark on the 2006 rock world, their efforts were supported by the wall-shaking arrival of a wide variety of previously lesser-known bands on the international scene—including such acts as Eighteen Visions, Shadows Fall, Atreyu, Unearth and Underoath. To the eyes and ears of many, it was this insurgence of fresh talent that truly marked '06 as something special in the annals of rock and roll. In fact, with events such as *Ozzfest*, *Unholy Alliance* and *Family Values* providing a proper forum for the advancement of these fast-rising metal upstarts, it would clearly seem as if 2006 emerged as a vital launching ground for hard rock's future stars.

"Having the chance to get out there and play made all the difference for us," said Shadows Fall frontman Brian Fair. "We've been around long enough to know just how vital that kind of exposure means to a young band's career, and we'll always be thankful to the people and bands that gave us that opportunity."

Despite the significant inroads that so many new band made in the hard rock world of 2006, it was still the form's established stars that focused the majority of public attention the form's way. From Audioslave (who scored big with their third release, *Revelations*) to Slayer (who returned to the scene after a four-year absence with their best-selling *Christ Illusion*), to Iron Maiden (who released their best album in years, *A Matter of Life & Death*), in '06 metal in all of its various forms and guises rocked the world to its very core.

"This is a great Maiden album for a number of reasons," said vocalist Bruce Dickinson. "First, we were all intimately involved in the writing process, so it's not anyone's personal vision. Then, it's rather experimental in a very 'Maiden Way.' By that I mean that you recognize the key elements that are always there, but you also recognize the twists."

Without a doubt, 2006 was a metal year to remember... bring on 2007!

TOP 5 LIVE ACTS

1. ROB ZOMBIE
2. MUDVAYNE
3. SYSTEM OF A DOWN
4. SLAYER
5. AFI

TOP 5 STARS

1. OZZY OSBOURNE
2. JONATHAN DAVIS
3. CHRIS CORNELL
4. TRENT REZNOR
5. BRUCE DICKINSON

TOP 5 MISSING IN ACTION

1. SLIPKNOT
2. AC/DC
3. METALLICA
4. VELVET REVOLVER
5. JUDAS PRIEST



ITAL

06

ARS UDS JDS!

BUCK + MEGADETH + MOTORHEAD
COIL + GODSMACK + 18 VISIONS



AUDIOSLAVE



DEFTONES



WOLFMOTHER



SLAYER *TAKING NO PRISONERS*

STONE SOUR *MAKING THEIR MARK*

OZZY OSBOURNE *THE GODFATHER RETURNS*

HIT PARADER

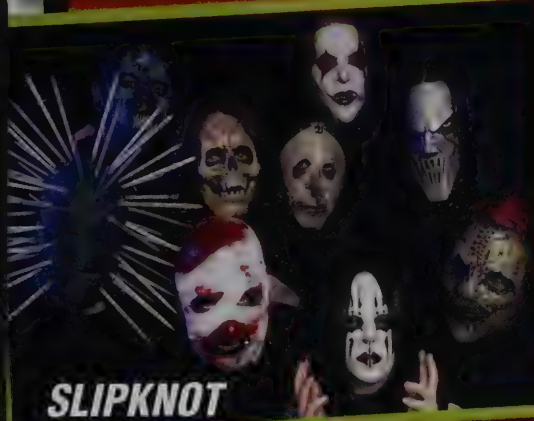
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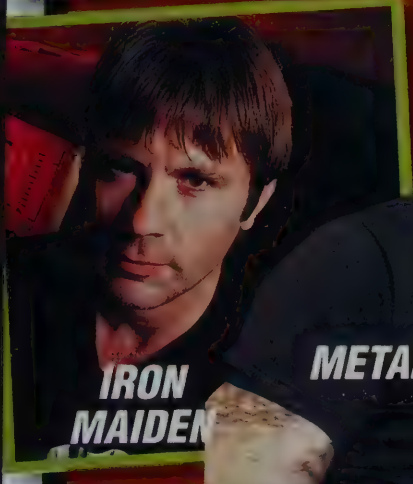
MASTODON



LAMB OF GOD

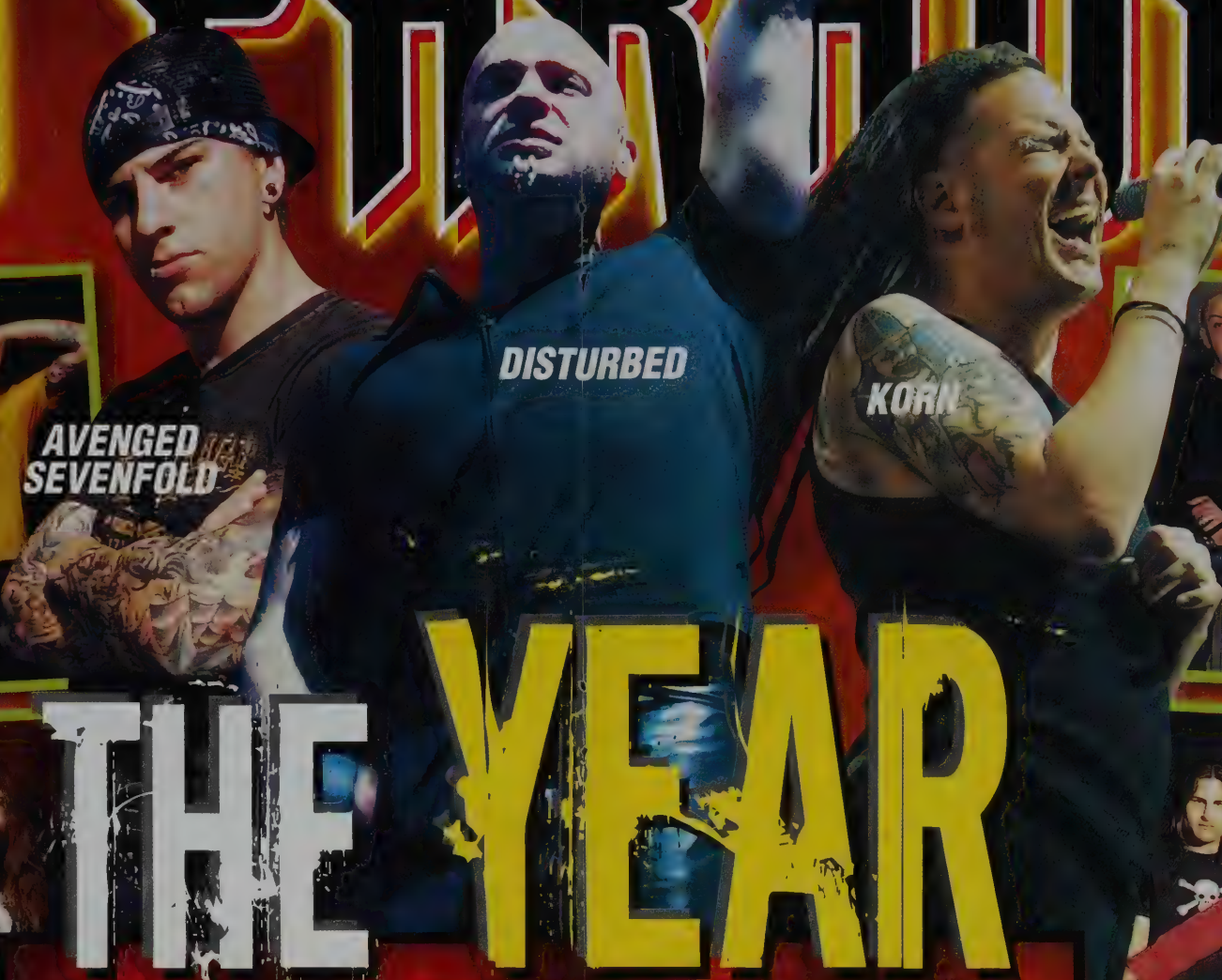


SLIPKNOT



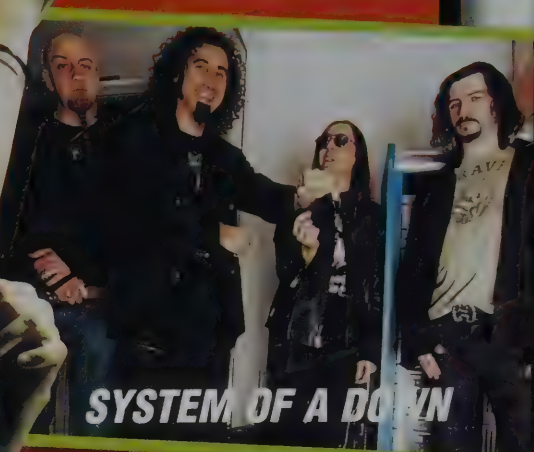
IRON MAIDEN

METALLICA



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KORN



SYSTEM OF A DOWN



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SEETHER + LACUNA**

MASTODON



HP

PHOTO ANNAMARIA DISANTO

It probably takes a band named Mastodon to create the kind of earth-shaking excitement that this Atlanta-based progressive metal unit has generated with the release of their latest album, **Blood Mountain**. Much like their fossiliferous forebearer, Mastodon manages to generate a trumpeting, foot-stomping, wall-wavering musical maelstrom... and they manage to do it with a degree of lyrical depth and musical sophistication that somewhat belies their "heavy metal" label. But for guitarist Bill Keliher, drummer Brann Dailor, bassist/vocalist Troy Saunders and guitarist/vocalist Brent Hinds, the success of their latest album, as well as the wide-ranging accolades that have come their way thanks to their participation in the recently

sojourn where few metal units have ever dared has watered down some of their most blatant rock power. But at the same time, most media scribes have quickly realized that Mastodon's efforts to push metal's creative boundaries have resulted in one of the year's stand-out hard rock collections.

"This is our best album... no question about it," Dailor said. "It's just so heavy, and so interesting, that I can't help but really dig it. With this being our first album for a new label, we wanted to make it something special. And if we can judge by the reaction that we've already gotten from the fans, we accomplished that goal. What's cool is that the fans got to hear some of the new music when we did *The Unholy Alliance* tour last summer, and they seemed to get off on it

Mastodon have cemented their position among the hottest young bands in the metal kingdom. This is clearly a unit that has the talent, the determination and the street credibility to win over the hard rock hordes by the truck-load. But with that kind of acclaim also comes a new-found degree of responsibility—particularly from those who proclaim Mastodon to be the latest "saviors" of the heavy metal form. And while the members of this power-packed quintet acknowledge the extra burden that has recently been placed upon their broad shoulders, they also manage to laugh at the notion that they're here to save the hard rock world from going off the deep end.

"We've heard what people have said about us and about this album, and we're

"IT'S HARD FOR US TO REALLY KNOW WHAT THE FANS WANT TO HEAR."

MASTODON

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

completed *Unholy Alliance* tour, have only served to further convince these power-packed rockers of one thing; that their brand of complex, thought-provoking and incredibly powerful hard rock is *exactly* what the metal masses crave.

"It's hard for us to really know what the fans want to hear," Saunders said. "But I think after touring as much as we have over the last few years, we've got a pretty good idea about that. Sometimes people don't think that metal fans want to hear things that they really have to listen to carefully in order to fully appreciate. We believe that's totally wrong. That's why on **Blood Mountain** we created one of the most complicated story lines that I can imagine. You can just sit back and enjoy the music. But you can also delve into what we're doing and really get involved in the story."

The inherent complexities displayed throughout **Blood Mountain** are certainly nothing new to Mastodon fans. The band's 2004 break-out disc, *Leviathan*, with its heavily-stylized *Moby Dick* theme, prepared metal followers around the globe for the ambitious approach favored by this megawatt crew. But on **Blood Mountain**, which stands as Mastodon's major label debut, this unit has kicked everything up a solid notch, making their songs simultaneously more complex and aggressive—while raising their lyrical quotient to an almost epic plateau. Some metal critics have already stated the belief that the band's attempts to

BY RYAN HARDING

right away. This is not an easy album to absorb when you first hear it—especially when you hear it live."

After that initial taste of **Blood Mountain** provided during the group's *Unholy Alliance* road trek, fans were ready, able and more-than-willing to delve into the sonic details of Mastodon's new disc upon its late-summer arrival. Presenting as it does the tale of a traveler who gets stranded atop Blood Mountain—and the myriad travails that he must face in order to attain his quest—the disc is a classic tale of determination and survival. Indeed, in many ways the story reflects Mastodon's own lengthy sojourn through the hard rock hinterlands on their quest to attain true music industry notoriety. On such songs as *Hunters of the Sky*, *The Sleeping Giant* and *The Siberian Divide*, mythic odes merge with modern metallic power to create a truly spell-binding album showcase.

"I don't think there's anything else quite like this album," Saunders said. "At its core, it's the story of someone who climbs a mountain and loses their way. When you're placed in a situation like that, where your survival is very much in question, you do whatever is necessary in order to make it through. Some of it is very graphic, and kind of shocking, but it all adds to the power of the story that unfolds."

With the immediate success of their major label debut, it would seem as if

very thankful for that," Dailor said. "But we don't really let it get to us. We're still very much a band that's stayed true to its core musical beliefs. We're just a good, heavy rock and roll band that's trying to make the best music we can. I just hope we can be part of making this kind of music important again. That would be cool. We've gone through a tough period in music where our style of rock just didn't get enough respect. But with albums by great bands like Tool and Slayer out, it seems like things have definitely turned in the right direction again. If we can help get people to listen to heavy, technical, progressive music again, then that would be great."

Now with their album climbing the charts, and their *Unholy Alliance* responsibilities in their rear-view mirror, Mastodon can begin to focus on the remainder of their road agenda... and a busy one it will be. The band has already planned an extensive North American tour to support the release of **Blood Mountain**, and as Dailor was anxious to tell us, the rest of the world won't be far behind.

"We're a band that lives to be on the road," he said. "That's all we think about. We want to just stay out there until everyone gets totally sick of us. But we want to do more than just play everywhere in North America. We want to take on the world. We're ready for them... we hope they're ready for us."



MASTODON

HP

It's never been particularly easy being Dave Mustaine. Over the last 25 years, few musical careers—and personal lives—have gone through more ups and downs, endured more highs and lows and waded through more epic victories and crushing defeats than those of Megadeth's main man. From that fateful day in 1982 when he split with his original band, Metallica (for a number of still-somewhat-mysterious reasons), through his well-documented, late-'80s battles with a variety of personal demons, to his "born again" religious resurrection in the mid-'90s, to the arm injury that threatened his career just a few years ago, Mustaine's existence has been the stuff of Grade A afternoon soap operas. Despite the near-continual run of platinum-coated album successes and sold-out world tours that have come

metal unit. On such previous discs as **Killing Is My Business... And Business Is Good**, **Rust In Peace** and **Countdown To Extinction** Mustaine and band (which at their peak featured guitarist Marty Friedman, drummer Nick Menza and bassist Dave Ellefson) created an intense, insightful and intriguing musical blend that stood out from the metal rabble like a beacon of light amidst the darkness. Perhaps only the mighty Metallica itself stood shoulder-to-shoulder along-side Megadeth in the fight to carry the metal empire to previously uncharted horizons—frontiers where instrumental competence and lyrical insight were just as important as pure, heavy-duty volume in communicating that group's musical message.

Today, with **United**

then, things have just been running wild, waiting for something to come along and grab hold of everyone's interest again."

On **United Abominations**, Megadeth may well have created the ideal disc to appeal to the widely-divergent demographic base that now comprises the hard rock universe. Sure, the raw power that has long been the band's trademark is still there in abundance. But, at the same time, new and exciting elements of Megadeth's musical attack are also present, running the gamut from instrumental complexity to straight-ahead aggression. While some cynics may scoff at the very notion that a band with Megadeth's metallic reputation may fit smoothly into

MEGADETH

MUSTAINE

BY ROB ANDREWS

way, over the years Mustaine has been widely hailed as everything from a deeply troubled soul, to a fascinating, complex, often brilliant guy who needed to overcome his varied problems not only to succeed...but to survive.

Thankfully, these days things have apparently taken a markedly better turn in the world of Mustaine and Megadeth. After years of inner-band turmoil, where the group's lineup would seemingly change with the regularity of the seasons, Mustaine has managed to maintain a semi-set roster for the last few months. In addition, now long clean and sober, Mustaine has transformed into one of heavy metal's most vital and respected forces, a guy whose previous accomplishments are now lauded by a new generation of rockers, many of whom grew up under the wing of Megadeth's heavy-handed influence. With the style of pedal-to-the-metal rock that Mustaine loves so dearly beginning to return to favor—thanks in no small part to the Megadeth-headlined *Gigantour* which this year featured the likes of Lamb of God, Opeth and Arch Enemy—it appears that with the release of Megadeth's long-awaited new disc, **United Abominations**, Mustaine is ready to wage a single-handed war to carry the metal form back to its former position of international dominance.

"I'm not here to be a savior of any sort," Mustaine said. "All I've ever wanted to do is play my music and hope that people respond to it. I don't really feel that Megadeth was ever part of some trend or style. We've always prided ourselves in kind of standing on our own. We're not the ones who jumped onto any musical bandwagon, whether it was a heavy metal bandwagon or not. Other people tried to place us there. I don't think we ever really belonged. We've always tried to do something that was a little different—and I think we succeeded."

It has always been virtually impossible to dismiss the riff-laden work of Megadeth as merely another vapid effort by either a mousse-abusing "hair band" or a demonically possessed death

ROCKERS

BACK! "I'M NOT HERE TO BE A SAVIOR OF ANY SORT."

Abominations (featuring a lineup of Mustaine on vocals and guitar, Glen Drover on guitar, his brother Shawn Drover on drums and James Lomenzo on bass), serving to reintroduce Megadeth to a generation that perhaps was too young to remember the band's halcyon days in the late-'80s, Mustaine feels confident that there are still plenty of new musical horizons left to conquer. Following the demise of various recent New Metal "revolutions" that threatened to reinvent the heavy metal wheel, Mustaine knows that Megadeth's brand of no-holds-barred hard rock remains as potentially combustible as ever. The ever-insightful rocker feels secure in the knowledge that heavy metal as he knows and loves it is still as viable a means of communicating the unique musical verbiage of rock and roll as ever before. While he realizes that there are still some hurdles for a band such as Megadeth to overcome, Mustaine seems confident that both he and his band are ready for any challenge that may be placed before them.

"Rock music is something that can evolve and change, but at its heart it's still about good playing, good songs and good attitude," he said. "I'm kind of glad that some of the other styles of music have come along over the last few years. Rock reached a point in the '90s where it really was going nowhere. It needed a big change. Since

the cutting-edge rock world of 2006, the fact is that Mustaine's undeniable talent and his unmatched creative vision have now supplied this unique group with the ideal forum through which to expand their support base. As the ever-fickle rock public decides to once again embrace the strident sounds of heavy rock, it seems a safe bet that Dave Mustaine and Megadeth will help lead that charge back up the metal mountain.

"I believe that old dogs can learn new tricks," he said. "That's one of the reasons I love *Gigantour*. It allows me to see and interact with a lot of young musicians. Some of them are doing amazing things... and a lot of them look up to Megadeth as a source of inspiration."



DAVE MUSTAINE

HP

"To be honest with you, I never think about it being 2006... or 1996... 1896."

BY WINSON CUMMINGS

Most of you reading this weren't even born back in 1977—the year that Motorhead launched their full-frontal assault on the rock and roll world. Over the intervening years, the infamous Lemmy and his ever-shifting legion of henchmen have created a legacy that few other bands can match. Never the biggest, never the brashest and never the most outrageous, these British bashers have continually produced a brand of straight-between-the-eyes rock that has blended all-out metal fury with surprising tunefulness and more than a touch of tongue-in-cheek humor. Quite simply, when it comes to putting the pedal to the metal nobody has ever done it better...or longer...or louder than Lemmy and his boys. Now, with the release of their latest album, **Kiss of Death**, these legendary Motormen seem determined to cast their intimidating influence upon the metal world of 2006.

"To be honest with you, I never think about it being 2006... or 1996... 1896," Lemmy said in his infamously gruff voice. "We just go about doing what we've always done—and hopefully doing it a little bit better than just about everyone else around. To me, it's always been about the songs and the playing. Showmanship is fine, I love it. But when it's used to hide the fact that you can't write, and you can't play, what good is it? On this album we've really come up with some good songs—and we've played them in the way that only Motorhead can."

Throughout **Kiss of Death**, especially on such amp-busting behemoths as *Sucker*, *One Night Stand* and *Under the Gun*, Motorhead once again prove why they stand alone among timeless merchants of metallic mayhem. With 14 songs clocking in at just over 46 minutes running time, this is an "old school" metal collection in every sense of the word—powerful blasts of guitar-driven fury that get in, get the job done, and then get out in a quick and orderly fashion... while leaving your ears ringing in the process. While Lemmy laughs at the current notion of not releasing a disc unless it has at least an hour's worth of music—along with a ton of DVD "extras"—he understands that these days he's battling to win over a new generation of fans.

"I'm not into all this new stuff," he said. "When I was coming along you still had albums—6 songs, 20 minutes on a side, that you had to get up and flip over. I guess I still believe a great album needs about a dozen songs and about 40 minutes to accomplish what you want. So this time there are 14 songs, and 46 minutes, so I guess there are some 'extras' in there. But 46 minutes of our music is worth two hours of just about anyone else's."

Ahh, the ever-modest Mr. Lemmy Kilminster...the man voted a "Sexual Legend" in a recent major magazine poll... the man as famous for his mole as for his music... the man who has never taken any gruff from any one at any time. So what if he's never enjoyed the degree of success in America that he's long yearned for. And so what if **Kiss of Death** will probably fall on deaf ears—especially those owned by still-wet-behind-the-ears fans weaned on the likes of Slipknot and Korn. For those followers of the hard rock scene who have grown up under Motorhead's pervasive influence, the linger-

MOTORHEAD

KISS & TELL

ing power and passion that this British unit bring to their work is more than enough to satisfy their metal-loving souls.

"For me it's still about getting my job done," Lemmy said. "It's a situation where I wake up each day and just go to work. There is nothing else in my life that matters. If I wasn't in a rock and roll band what would someone like me do? I'm a lifer—that's what my motivation is. I'm also bitter about a lot of things—that anger is the basis for a lot of the music we make. I look at the way we've been treated by most of the record labels we've been on in America and it has to make you angry. Most of them didn't give a damn about rock and roll, and they sure didn't give a damn about us. They were just a bunch of suits hired to do a job, and most of them soon lost their jobs due to their incompetence."

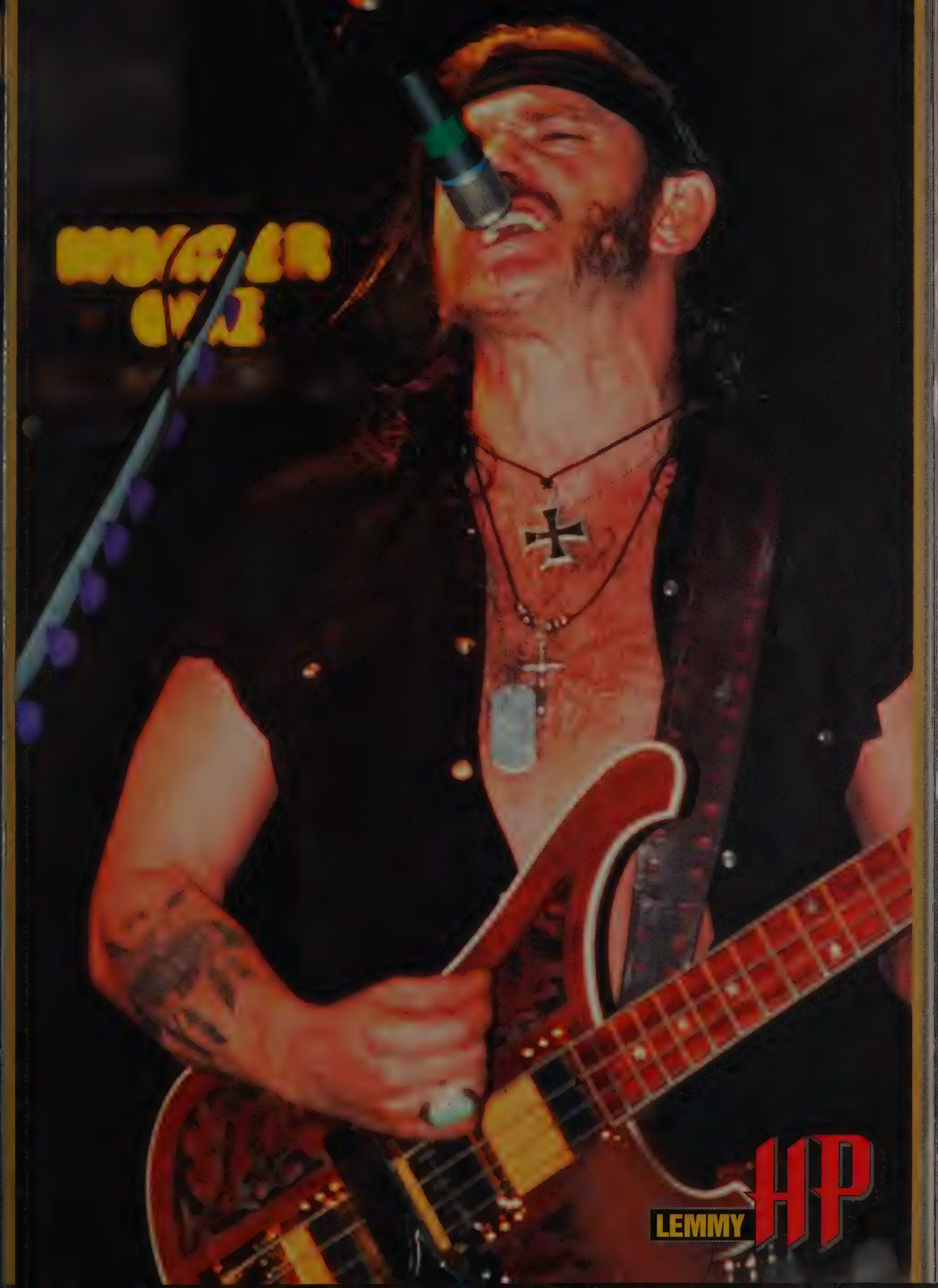
Having been through—at last count—six different American labels, it's easy to understand Lemmy's acrimony towards the State-side music scene. While Motorhead has enjoyed their well-earned moments in the sun throughout Europe, on this side of the Atlantic life has rarely been easy. They've toured endlessly (usually as the second or third act on a major bill) and paid their dues in every imaginable manner. But for whatever reason, success in America has mostly eluded Lemmy... not that he still doesn't hold out hope that the situation will eventually change.

"I'd still love for us to have a song in the charts in America," he said. "We've had that all over the world, except in America, and that's something I believe could still happen. I thought we've had a few good chances over the years, but something always comes up to bite us on the ass. We've had hits everywhere else, from England to Germany, but America remains very elusive. In Europe the press still has a lot of say about things and there's a degree of loyalty to the bands you've followed for years. Over here, things like MTV have the major say, and they tend to be so trendy, and so pointless, that they wouldn't know good rock and roll if it crashed into them."

As one of the true "Godfathers" of the metal form, it's inevitable that in any conversation with Lemmy the current state of rock and roll becomes a primary topic. While he insists that Motorhead continues to exist in a musical vacuum of their own design, he is also quick to admit that he's very aware of the latest happenings within the music world.

"You have to be aware of what's going on, it's hard not to be," Lemmy said. "But on the other hand, it would be death to us if we let anything ever have an affect on us. All we've ever wanted to do was play the best Motorhead music in the world, and I think it's safe to say we do that. We don't want to be the hippest, the latest or the coolest, because that means that a week from now you're finished. Trends and fashion are what kills good music. Hard rock, heavy metal, whatever you want to call it—it's all just rock and roll. That's what we do; we're a rock and roll band. There certainly isn't enough rock and roll these days. Everyone's too timid to play it. They want to hide behind their computers and their techno-pop. But if rock and roll

needs a band to help show the way back, Motorhead is here to help it along."



LEMMY **HP**

LAMB OF GOD HOLY ROLLERS

It's been said by those who say such things that attending a heavy metal concert is somewhat akin to partaking in a religious event. The energy, the passion, the pure emotional fervor all blend together to make it nothing less than a true "sacrament" upon those in attendance. How appropriate it is then that the members of Lamb of God have chosen to title their latest album **Sacrament**... a heavily metallic dose of musical mayhem expressly designed to anoint this band's ever-loyal followers in the next outpouring from the LOG metal juggernaut. For vocalist Randy Blythe, guitarist Mark Morton, guitarist Willie Adler, drummer Chris Adler and bassist John Campbell, the arrival of **Sacrament**—teamed with their recent tours as part of the *Unholy Alliance* road trek (where they shared the stage with Slayer and Mastodon), and the subsequent dose of wall-shaking riffs the band offered during their early fall *Gigantour* run with Megadeth—has now clearly catapulted this Atlanta-based unit into the upper echelon of hard rock society.

"We're really glad that the people who've heard this music have reacted to it so well," Adler said. "When we started writing for **Sacrament** we were determined to keep the key ingredients of this band together, but at the same time to really push things in some new directions. That's not always an easy thing to do, especially for a band like ours that is still relatively unfamiliar to a lot of people."

On **Sacrament** it is crystal clear that Lamb of God have taken the lessons learned from the success of their major label debut, 2004's **Ashes of the Wake**, and put that collective knowledge to good use. Working again with noted producer Machine (best known for his efforts with Eighteen Visions, Every Time I Die and Clutch), LOG have managed to show that "modern metal" need not be derivative... nor need it be a reinvention of the proverbial wheel. This time around, especially on songs like the disc's debut single, *Redneck*, the band manages to balance classic metal principles with cutting edge ideals, in the process creating a style that has drawn the attention of metal's biggest bands—especially the likes of recent touring mates like Slipknot and Slayer.

"One of the things I like best about Lamb of God is that they're playing their own style of metal," said Slayer bassist Tom Araya. "They're not trying to sound like anyone else... they're happy just being themselves."

And, come to think of it, why shouldn't Lamb of God be happy? They've already been hailed as one of the leaders of metal's latest "wave," their two major label discs have enjoyed a string of critical kudos as well

as unbridled fan support, and their live shows have packed arenas around the globe. But rather than celebrating their myriad recent successes in the songs featured on **Sacrament**, this time around the band has presented a series of introspective, probing and highly emotive odes that examine the darker side of the human experience.

"Some people criticized us for being a little too political on *Ashes*," Morton said. "So this time I think we presented songs that are a little more personal. We don't want the fans who got into what we were saying last time to think that those subjects still don't mean a great to us, because they do. But we deliberately wanted to change things up a little bit this time."

Through their ability to "change things up," and their willingness to take abundant musical chances throughout **Sacrament**, Lamb of God have once again provided unique perspectives into their unusual creative process. Rather than following metal convention in song structure, lyrical content or even production values, this unit has chosen to walk their own path—and they've

done so in a way that has helped catapult 21st Century metal back into the public imagination. Part progressive rock prophets, part new-age messiahs, part thrash metal masters, this fearsome fivesome seem determined to be all things to all people... at least to all people who like things decidedly different, and decidedly heavy.

"We play music that straddles the line between progressive rock and what you may want to call traditional rock," Campbell said. "I think we make prog-rock more listenable without cheapening the progressiveness of it. The complexity of our music appeals to people who like technical playing, but the arrangements are not so extreme that they fly over the average listener's head. It's a good balance."

"Being together for so many years has allowed us some special opportunities to keep pushing the boundaries of the metal form," Chris Adler added. "We've always gone against the grain of what a metal band is supposed to sound like. Because of that, we perhaps haven't enjoyed the kind of recognition that we've always believed our music merited. With this album we allowed our instincts and experiences to shape each song as a piece of the larger picture."

Ever since 1990, when Morton, Chris Adler and Campbell first met as students at Virginia Commonwealth University, this unit has remained steadfastly determined to play by their own metallic rules. Through their early days as Burn the Priest, through tough times when various band members temporarily left the band's fold, this outfit rocked on, determined to make their mark on the rock world. By the time they had decided to evolve into Lamb of God in 1997 they felt ready to record their debut disc, **New American Gospel**. Two more years of non-stop touring prepared the band to release their next indie effort, **As the Palaces Burn**. That album garnered mainstream media support on both sides of the Atlantic and served to bring the band to major label attention. And it was under a major's corporate umbrella that they recorded their groundbreaking **Ashes of the Wake**, the disc that helped introduce Lamb of God to the metal masses. Now, with the immediate acclaim being heaped upon **Sacrament**, it seems that the members of LOG have turned that initial introduction into a full-throttle musical celebration of all things "heavy."

"Each album we've done has been a snapshot in time for us," Chris Adler said. "It shows who we are and what we're capable of doing, both individually and as a band. We've continued to grow, and the new album is certainly no exception. Right now, we've never been better at making seriously kick-ass music."

"This time I think we presented songs that are a little more personal."



LAMB OF GOD



THE EDGE

HARD ROCK'S NEW STARS

BY: AMY SCIARRETTO

SEEMLESS

Massachusetts band Seamless play rock and roll with soul. They play heavy metal that's got a raging case of the blues. And that's a damn good thing.

Seamless care about crafting tight, solid, unforgettable, and timeless rock music that will live on long after the members have left this earthly plane on their new album, the soulful, classic rock sounding **What Have We Become**. "This is rock the way it's supposed to be done," says vocalist Jesse Leach. "It's music written by music geeks for music geeks."

What Have We Become is indeed a throwback to the '70s, when AOR radio was all the rage, and radio stations played deep album cuts, not just hit singles. **What Have We Become** has depth, breadth, range, and scope, and will satisfy the hungry jones present in any rock fan.

few songs," Leach, known for his powerful, poetic and spiritually themed lyrics, reveals. "All four of us wrote the song, *Seven*. Everyone contributed lyrically and melodically, and that's a first, as no one has had input with my lyrics before. I know when I sing those words that we all had something to do with the creation of that song and it's a beautiful thing." That statement illustrates just how in tune the members of Seamless—drummer Derek Kerswill, guitarist Pete Cortese, and bassist Jeff Fultz—are with one another and why **What Have We Become** is a tight, flawless slab of blues-infused rock.

"I am not straying from my views or core beliefs," Leach continues, referencing his lyrical narratives and point of view. "But with this album, I embraced a darker side of myself, and that's like I am being more honest, by looking at a darker side of myself and letting people know I understand that dark side. I understand depression. I'm there, too."

It's that type of honesty that connects Seamless to the average rock and roll fan. "We come from blue collar, working backgrounds," Leach continues. "We like to give the fans their money's worth, and make albums, not singles. This is an album, and it all ties together. You want to buy an album, go for a drive, and listen from start to finish. We want people to listen from start to finish."

Drummer Kerswill concurs, "This music comes from living, from heart and soul. This is in our blood. We



SEEMLESS FAST FACTS:

* Guitarist Pete Cortese is also a member of the recently reunited metal band Overcast, which also features Killswitch Engage bassist Mike D'Antonio and Shadows Fall vocalist Brian Fair.

* Kerswill is an accomplished studio drummer. He has worked with Stryper—yes, Stryper—as well as Icedpick and Kingdom Of Sorrow, two side projects fronted by Hatebreed frontman Jamey Jasta.

Leach, who got his start as the original frontman for Killswitch Engage, claims that the writing and recording process for this record was the best of his career, due to the collaborative chemistry the members shared. "This is the first time in my career where I had the guys work on the lyrics on a



THE BRONX FAST FACTS:

live and breathe it. We're not teenagers with stars in our eyes. For us, it's honest. You get a piece of us when you listen to this." **What Have We Become** was recorded live with little help from studio equipment and trickery, making it an honest, organic slab of rock. It's also what happened when you put four passionate music geeks in a room together.

* Joby J. Ford is the singer's real name. It's not a stage moniker. He has another band, called *The Drips*.

* Ford likes to cook salmon, shellfish, and many different things. "Because I am male and I love fire, I like to cook BBQ," he laughs. He doesn't bake, though, saying, "That's out of my element, and awesome moms do that."

* Ford also claims that he and his bandmates are "connoisseurs of fine cuisine" who have big cooking parties and try to outdo each other. "We have culinary cookoffs," he says. *Bon Appetit!* Maybe their label should sponsor a contest where one lucky fan gets to eat a meal prepared by The Bronx.



THE BRONX

The Bronx have just spent a whopping 26 hours in their tour van. They are on the road, driving from Seattle to Denver for their next show, and the members of the band didn't get a chance to hop into the shower and wash away the day's dirt, sweat, and grime.

"I feel pungent," says uber-confident vocalist Joby J. Ford. "It's gross, because there are six of us in this vehicle. We try to get drunk and pass out to deal with it. We don't use the Baby Wipes and take Baby Wipes showers. We just get used to it!" Apparently, The Bronx, who had former Guns N' Roses guitarist Gilby Clarke help them with their demo, are real troopers, and don't care about sacrificing cleanliness to bring their art to the masses.

Despite their borough-specific name, The Bronx are not from New York. Rather, they hail from the city of Angels, also known as Los Angeles. "We thought it would be a good idea, since there is this whole imaginary battle, you know, West Coast vs. East Coast, Left Coast vs. Right Coast," says 30-year-old vocalist, who is a life-

long Angelino. "We thought, 'Let's stick it to the East Coast by naming ourselves the Bronx. It took us so long before someone from The Bronx actually called us out on it. It happened six months ago, via email. The email read, 'Why not come play the Bronx and see how it goes?' Well, that guy wins. We emailed him back, and said, 'We'll come play your house and blast the roof off your crappy house!'" As of press time, there's no word whether or not The Bronx went and actually played The Bronx.

That's a pretty ballsy proposition, to offer to play someone's crib, but it makes sense, coming from Ford and his flashy, hard rockin' band. The Bronx are on in your face and all over the place on their Island Records debut, **The Bronx**, which is not to be confused with their first self-titled record, which was released by Ferret Music in 2003. "It's pretty annoying," Ford says, about his band's style and new record. "It's going to give you a headache, so here's a suggestion. Take an aspirin. It's going to take you through a sonic landscape and it moves, and takes you to outer space and back down

THE EDGE

HARD ROCK'S NEW STARS



ALL THAT REMAINS FAST FACTS:

*Labonte admits to having Prince, Nickelback, Alan Jackson, Tupac, All-American Rejects, Keith Urban, Nickelback, Dragonforce, Eminem, Flyleaf, Fallout Boy, and Foo Fighters on his iPod. "I love a lot of different kinds of music," he says. No kidding. Cheers to Labonte for admitting what he likes, no matter how guilty of a pleasure.

***The Fall Of Ideals** was produced by Adam Dutkiewicz, guitarist for Killswitch Engage. "He's really is great at his job as a producer, and he works hard," Labonte says. "We know we'll get in there, and things might be frustrating and he might make us mad, as musicians, but it all boils down to having a record sound a certain way and he is the guy you go to get that. We trust him and have known him for years."

to earth. We're not like anyone else, and that is a feat in this day and age, given the masses of gelatinous garbage that is coming out. You hear the same band a thousand times, and there is no other band that sounds like us. And I have no idea what we sound like, either."

That's a broad statement, but you gotta love Ford's confidence and self-awareness, as well as his self-assuredness. "We genre-jump," he finishes. "We can hold our own with the heaviest bands out there. We don't fit anywhere, but we fit everywhere. We pride ourselves on that, and we can switch it up." Kudos to The Bronx, for being a jigsaw puzzle piece that can fit anywhere.

ALL THAT REMAINS

"At this point, we're able to do what we want to do," proclaims All That Remains vocalist Phil Labonte about his band's newest album, **The Fall Of Ideals** (Prosthetic). Musically, the album is a riff clinic, full of death metal chords and thrashy guitar parts; if you're an aspiring shredder, then your friends here at **Hit Parader** highly suggest picking up the record, because you'll learn something, thanks to its high level of musicianship. There's also a firestorm of blast beats.

But All That Remains have made some changes. Labonte has expanded his vocal range on the record, traversing newer, more melodic terrain. "I've worked hard on doing as much as I can do

vocally," the singer, who used to have a job shilling cell phones *before* everyone in the world owned a cell phone and *before* he was able to devote himself full time to his music, finishes. "We feel comfortable doing this stuff, and we can do it, and do it well. It's not going to come off as something we can't handle or replicate live. There were no limitations on my voice. I have gotten to the point where I can do a lot of stuff, and I have some versatility."

He's right. Rather than bark himself hoarse, Labonte has pushed himself further, and the result is a new, improved All That Remains. Most people know that Labonte got his start as the singer for Shadows Fall on their debut, **Sombre Eyes To The Sky**. But for Labonte, that's ancient history, and he's moved on and couldn't be happier with his current band, who just wrapped up their first stint on Ozzfest's side stage.

"I wasn't 100% happy in the band and I wanted to have other creative outlets," he says, reflecting on his long-ago exit from Shadows

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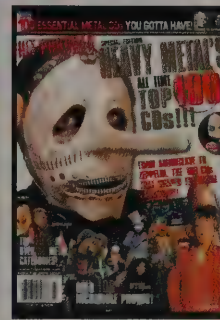
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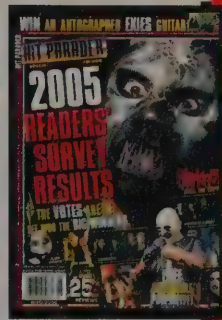
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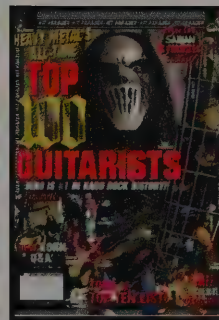
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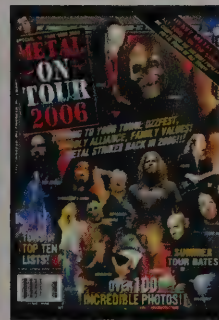
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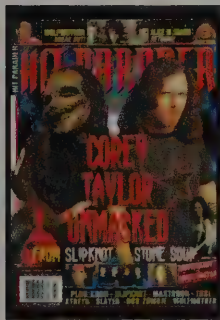
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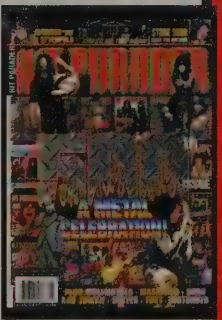
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THE EDGE

HARD ROCK'S NEW STARS



LEAVES EYES FAST FACTS:

* Kristine was once the lead singer for the influential band, Theatre Of Tragedy. Krull also sings for longtime metal band Atrocity.

* Leaves Eyes own their own studio, called Mastersound. They are extremely DIY, booking their own concerts and answering all their fan mail themselves.

* Kristine appears on the title track of Cradle Of Filth's *Nymphelamine*.

Fall. "I wasn't bummed about being asked to leave. It was an ego hit, sure. Look at it this way: if you're not happy in a relationship, and you want to break up with the person, and they beat you to the punch, and break up with you first, you're like 'Damn! They got to it first.' But seriously, I don't look back and wish I stayed. I am extremely happy with where I am. On the new record, we cover a decent amount of ground. We go to the extremes. There is some stuff that is very poppy and with lots of clean singing. This is also the heaviest set of songs we've ever written. They are aggressive and heavy, and we get closer to death metal than a lot of bands out there that aren't death metal bands but that are aggressive. We feel like we found *our* sound."

Judging from the improved level of playing and songwriting on *The Fall Of Ideals*, which ups the ante considerably from 2004's excellent *This Darkened Heart*, it's very clear that Labonte and All That Remains have found their sound. Ever humble, the singer says, "I am fortunate enough to play music and have people pay attention."

LEAVES EYES

"To be honest, I feel very comfortable being a woman in the metal genre," says Leaves Eyes vocal temptress, Liv Kristine, without a hint of hesitation. "Especially since I am working with my best friends. The guys in Leaves Eyes - they are true gentlemen. We are all best friends and one happy family."

Metal fans who like a more traditional, yet progressive sound will flock to Leaves Eyes. Yes, it's an acquired taste—guitar-focused metal topped by angelic female vocals— but once it hits your metal tastebuds, you will appreciate it for its epic, symphonic qualities. "We see how the audience grows show by show, tour by tour," Kristine, who admits to loving her daily jog, even while on the road, points out. "It's a very passionate audience."

On their new EP, *Legend Land*, Kristine's lush, femme voice hovers over proggy, Euro-metal riffing and pretty keyboards. "Our music has a unique atmosphere, elegance and power to it," says Kristine, who sports a cascade of long blonde hair, but claims her husband, singer Alexander Krull, sports the longest locks in the band! "The concept of the music brings together Norwegian nature, history and compassion," Kristine explains. "It's a unique 'package,' and it takes you away on a wonderful journey, away from your daily stressed lives." We're not going to argue with the lovely Miss Kristine, since *Legend Land* has plenty of muscular guitar parts, and Krull spits out plenty of guttural growls, but Kristine's siren-like croon lends an ethereal, peaceful quality to songs like *Skraelings* and *Viking's Word*. Ultimately, this six-song recording strikes the perfect balance between lush and loud, between hard and heavenly. It's got a folksy element to it, and advances a story through the lyrics.

Expanding on the new mini-CD, Kristine says, "*Legend Land* is a continuation of our second album, *Vinland Saga*, and it goes more into details concerning the Vikings and their stay in North America, after Leif Eriksson and his crew discovered it." The mini-CD came to fruition when the band unexpectedly turned up at their studio during the 2005 Christmas holidays. "Suddenly, we had five songs ready, which is too much for a single, but not enough for an album," Kristine, who moved to Germany from her native Norway a decade ago, recalls. "We had to go on tour again, and we didn't have the time to write more songs. Thus, we decided to release a mini-album for the price of a single as a 'Thank You' to our fans and audience. Moreover, writing about my home country helps me to cope with my homesickness!"

And if making pretty heavy metal can't cure homesickness, then nothing else can!

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KORN

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KORN AD

As he labors to complete his new studio album, and fondly looks back on his latest *Ozzfest* run, we felt like this was the perfect time for a little reminiscing about the one-and-only Ozzy Osbourne.

This writer can vividly recall his first meeting with the Ozz way back in 1977. He was a member of Black Sabbath at the time; it being still two years before he had his legendary falling out with guitarist Tony Iommi. Back then Ozzy was an unpredictable, somewhat scary figure who sat in the corner of a large conference room, his long, straight hair covering his face, drinking cup after cup of tea. Then deeply involved with both drugs and alcohol (as well as being very unhappy about both his personal and professional lives) that conversation proved to be more of a psychiatric profile than a mere interview.

"I am an unhappy person who is liable to

Ozzy Osbourne. Of course, we jumped at the opportunity. Within minutes, that familiar British accent was on the line, explaining how he had gotten a new band together, found a new manager, and was looking for an American record deal. He actually sounded happy.

"The lady you just spoke to is serving as my manager at the moment," he said. "And the band is very exciting. I'm working with some old friends in Lee Kerslake and Bob Daisley, and I've found this kid guitarist named Randy who I think can be fantastic."

Little did we realize at that time that his new manager, Sharon, would soon become his second wife, and that the Randy in question, a fellow with the last name of Rhoads, would quickly emerge as one of the stellar talents of his time prior to his untimely death in 1981—a passing that continues to haunt Osbourne to this very day. As it happened, a

seemingly never-ending battles against drugs and alcohol. At one moment Ozzy would proclaim how he was going to kick his habits "because I want my kids to respect me." Then five minutes later, he'd state, "I'm an addict and I guess I always will be."

Perhaps it was this unique love/hate relationship Ozzy had with himself that always made him so appreciated by his legion of fans. They seemed to sense that here was a troubled man who only found total solace when he stood in the spotlight surrounded by those who asked nothing more from him than to "get crazy" every night. Nobody gave more than Ozzy Osbourne on stage. He was a whirling dervish of energy playing off of whomever was his guitar foil at the time—Randy Rhoads, Bernie Torme, Brad Gillis, Jake E. Lee or Zakk Wylde. No matter how great his personal turmoil, Ozzy never let it affect his show.

"When I'm on stage, that's when I come

OZZY OSBOURNE

The Godfather Returns

BY RICK BLASDELL

"I'm very tempted to take all my clothes off and jump in."

do just about anything at any time," Ozzy stated during that talk. "I don't know how much more of this I can take. People think that being in a rock and roll band is all fun... but it's not."

Less than a year later, another meeting with Osbourne found the vocalist to be in a more upbeat mood, believing that Sabbath had solidified their musical approach once again. But that brief moment of contentment wasn't to last long. Within a year Ozzy had quit Sabbath not once but twice (his first departure lasted for little more than a month). Following his final split, he was truly a forlorn figure. His marriage had fallen apart, no American record company would touch him, and his "nasty habits" had gotten out of control.

Then one day in early 1980, the phone rang in the *Hit Parader* corporate office. On the other end was a young lady named Sharon Arden who wanted to know if we would have interest in talking to a certain Mr.

few months after Ozzy's debut solo LP, *Blizzard Of Ozz*, was released in Europe, he landed an American deal, and the rest, as they say, is history.

From then on, *Hit Parader's* dealing with Ozzy followed a rather conventional path. Usually a few months prior to the release of a new album or the start of a new tour, a call would come from a publicist in England asking if we wanted to arrange an interview. Then following the album's release, an in-person get together was usually arranged, either in such "mundane" rock and roll locales as Los Angeles or New York, or such exotic places as Rio de Janeiro. Ozzy was almost always the same—especially if he was with the ever-more imposing Sharon—low key, almost passive, but with that twinkle in his eye that told you all hell could break loose at any second.

"I'm very tempted to take all my clothes off and jump in," he said as we sat by a crowded hotel swimming pool in Rio de Janeiro in 1985. A quick look over at Sharon, however, turned the metal madman back into an obedient little boy who knew he'd be punished if he misbehaved. "Well, maybe I'll do it later."

As his fame continued to grow, it often appeared quite obvious that Ozzy was having trouble handling his ever-expanding notoriety. While he was the ultimate media darling, with his bat-biting, head-shaving, Alamo-pissing exploits keeping him in the headlines, he never truly seemed to be content. A constant subject of conversation would be his

alive," he said in 1988. "Anything else is put in the background—it's like a release. All my problems can be forgotten—at least for a few minutes."

It always seemed strange to the many who knew him and cared about him that no matter how many platinum albums he recorded, or how many sold-out performances he gave, Ozzy was a man always at war with his personal demons. But thanks to his beloved Sharon, he eventually began to get a grip on those problems. First he overcame his 20-year drug dependency, and finally he began to control his life-long drinking problem. Suddenly, he was thinking, speaking and acting clearer than ever before—and almost simultaneously, he began to look at life beyond rock and roll.

His attentions seemed to waver in-and-out, at least until the unexpected opportunity came to rejoin Black Sabbath back in 1998. Since then, whether through his top-rated MTV series, through his now-legendary *Ozzfest* or through his ever-more-infrequent recordings—with his upcoming disc being his first studio effort in four years—Ozzy Osbourne has continually proven he is more than just an "interesting" figure in rock and roll history. For more than 35 years he has proven to be the Metal Godfather, perhaps the single most important and influential performer in the annals of the hard rock form.

"It's hard to believe that people still love me as much as they do," he said in the midst of his most recent *Ozzfest* run in the summer of 2006. "I imagine I must be doing something right."



OZZY

HP

Orange County metalcore band Bleeding Through—vocalist Brandon Schieppati, keyboardist Marta, drummer Derek Youngsma, bassist Ryan Wombacher, and guitarists Scott Danough and Brian Leppke—are enjoying their hard-earned success. Their new album, *The Truth*, is selling briskly. Their good-looking faces are splashed all over most metal music magazines, including this one. They enjoyed a fixed slot on this year's *Ozzfest*. They take risks in their music, infusing their moshy, guitar-driven, extreme metal with atmospheric, playful keyboards. Clearly, things are going swimmingly in the Bleeding Through camp. But despite all the band's positive momentum, most of the songs on *The Truth* rip and tear with bared claws, due to the vicious vocals of Schieppati. He's one angry fellow on record, and when on stage, he runs around like a madman and bounces like he's on a trampoline. He's full of energy when performing, but when *HIT PARADER* chatted with Schieppati over the phone, he was pleasant, calm and lucid. He opened up to us about the band's *Ozzfest* appearance, the band's success, what he's learned, and his upcoming nuptials.

BLEEDING THROUGH HOT 'N NASTY

BY AMY SCJARRETTO

You're winding up your second *Ozzfest* stint, and you've been locked into one of the fixed slots, playing later in the day. What's been the most exciting thing about your second tour of duty on metal's biggest summer tour?

Our first time out, we were nervous about making a name for ourselves. It was exciting to play in front of people for the first time, and now we returned to play in front of people who are somewhat familiar with the band. The first time, it was about exposure, and the responses weren't that great, because sometimes, you play at 9 AM. Now we really enjoyed the response from the crowds.

That's a great attitude. It keeps you on your toes, so that you're turning out great performances every day.

Yes, it totally does.

A lot of attention is focused on your keyboardist Marta, because she is a pretty girl. Do you think that's a hindrance to the band?

I don't think it's a major factor. On stage, she gets exposure, but she's up there with us. In the UK, they go mad over any female in any band and right now, she is it for them, and she deals with it well, so it doesn't impact the band. At the end of the day, exposure for her is the same as exposure for the band. And that's always good.

You chose to do Bleeding Through rather than going to college and playing sports. Looking back, was that a wise choice?

I played baseball seriously in high school, and saw that as my ticket to go to college, but I fell in love with music and that diverted my attention away from college life. I went to community college and decided that it wasn't for me. It was definitely a wise choice, especially since the band is doing so well right now. We're doing way better than I ever thought and I am having a good time. As long as we keep going, I am going to feel like I made the right choice. Plus, you can always go back to college.

Do you come from a musical background?

My mom made me play piano when I was young, and I don't remember liking it, but I was good at it.

Bleeding Through are selling out tour dates, with kids flying in from around the world. We heard that six dudes flew in from Trinidad for a recent New York City show. Does that blow your mind?

It's insane. It's a total trip out. Every show is sold out. We took a step up, in terms of the size of venues that we play, and we were worried about filling these bigger rooms. But the kids have come out and that is a sign of things to come. When those kids came from Trinidad, we felt a lot of pressure, because what if we weren't good that night? But they seemed to have a great time, which took some of the pressure off of us.

Are you surprised by how well *The Truth* is selling? It's doing well for such an extreme record.

I am still sort of surprised by it. I knew people would go out and buy it, because of the success of the last record, *This Is Love, This Is Murderous*. So, I had an idea

of what to expect in that sense. I realized, though, it's not how many records you sell, but how many people you put in a building. It's about how many people come see you play. We've doubled our live draw and that's way more important to me. I didn't expect that. Now, we'll play at a place in Atlanta, and there will be 1200 people there, as opposed to the last time we headlined that same venue, when there were only 150 people there.

How do you stay in such good shape and keep your stamina while on the road?

Do you hit different gyms in the cities you play?

Yes. We don't soundcheck until 4 PM, so I don't sit around on the bus doing nothing. I used to bring my own workout equipment with me on the road, but now I find local gyms and walk or take a cab. I always find a place to work out! I try to keep track of all the places I go while on the road.

Why do you think a kid who's into rock and metal would like Bleeding Through and *The Truth*?

When we wrote this record, we wanted it to have lot of different elements that people *already* into the band would appreciate. We accomplished that. As for someone who has never heard of the band, I think they'd be into us because we have a little something for everyone in our music. We have keyboards, and there is singing. There is heaviness, and there are thrash elements. It's got a little bit of everything.

Everyone in the band is straight edge, which means you don't drink or do drugs. Is that a requirement to be in the band?

Yes, it is, but we don't wave the flag about it. We just love that lifestyle, and we don't push the issue into people's faces. We're all straight edge, but we're not militant about it. It wasn't pushed in my face when I was growing up, and that is why I embraced it the way I did. When something is pushed in your face, it can ruin it for you, or make you turn away from it. We've just always been straight edge, personally, but our music isn't about being straight edge.

Can you give a little insight into the "Truth" referenced in the title?

It's about rebuilding emotions. I hope that the lyrics of the record can help people going through tough emotional issues. It helped me get through my own issues! I know if it helps the writer of the material, it can help someone else out there. Or so I hope.

Finally, is there anything new and exciting going on in your life?

Well, I got married back in June.

Congratulations! It's gotta be tough to be in a touring band when you're married, but we're pretty sure you can make it work!

I will. It's great! Another thing I've learned is that you can only be miserable and hopeless for so long, and there will come a time when something switches inside of you and things take a turn. That is what the record is about. Life doesn't suck all the time. Maybe the next Bleeding Through record will be about happy things, like puppy dogs and babies!

"WE HAD AN IDEA WHAT TO EXPECT THIS TIME AROUND... BUT IT'S BEEN EXCEEDED."



BLEEDING THROUGH

HP

Take a bit of Sabbath-like guitar bluster. Throw in a pinch of Skynyrd-styled southern muscle. Add a healthy heaping of Soundgarden-inspired sonic roar. If you mixed all these volatile rock and roll ingredients together, what you'd end up with might sound a lot like the music presented on Black Stone Cherry's self-titled debut disc. Throughout that effort, this incredibly young (all the band's members range between the ages of 20 and 22) Kentucky-based foursome prove that while their sound may hark back to a variety of "classic rock" influences, the results they achieve are distinctly up-to-date. For vocalist/guitarist Chris Robertson, guitarist Ben Wells, bassist Jon Lawhorn and drummer John Fred Young, the battle to balance their penchant for maintaining hard rock traditions with the desire to take the metal form to exciting new frontiers has long stood at the foundation of the BSC musical mission. And as we recently discovered during our conversation with band spokesman Young, that melding of diverse styles, times and temperaments have usually yielded some rather dynamic results.

Hit Parader: Black Stone Cherry sounds like a *Ben & Jerry's* ice cream flavor.

John Fred Young: Yeah, it does, doesn't it. Hey, maybe if we keep selling records we can cut some kind of deal with them in the future. But the name really doesn't mean anything special... it was just one of those things that we all kind'a came up with one day and it stuck. If you really wanna try and break it down, I guess you could say that "black" is for some of our attitude, "stone" is for the heaviness of the music and "cherry" is for the ladies.

HP: You're all rather young. How did you develop such a "classic" hard rock sound?

JFY: It's something that kind of grew on us naturally. We've been surrounded by great musicians our entire lives, and even when we first got together when we were all in our mid-teens, we rehearsed in a room that had all these vintage rock posters on the wall... bands like Cream and Zeppelin and Mountain. So I guess we developed an interest in what those groups had done and some of that naturally seeped into our music. But it's not like we're trying to recapture what those bands were doing so many years ago. This is our version of rock and roll... and it comes from our hearts and our souls.

HP: You all hail from a rather out-of-the-way place.

JFY: Yeah, that's true (laughs) We're all from a small town called Edmonton which is the central part of Kentucky. It's a nice enough place, but there isn't a lot going on down there. You tend to hang with your friends and either play music, listen to music or get into trouble. I guess music was our thing. Believe it or not, it's a 'dry county' where you can't even get alcohol, so you've really got to work at it to find ways to stay entertained.

BLACK STONE CHERRY

BY ROB ANDREWS

"'Black' is for some of our attitude, 'stone' is for the heaviness of the music and 'cherry' is for the ladies."

HP: We know your dad, Richard, of the Kentucky Headhunters, was one of the producers of *Black Stone Cherry*. How did it feel working with him?

JFY: Obviously he's very familiar with us and our music, and he's got such an amazing ear. He was a huge help. He knows exactly where we're coming from—no egos, just great music—and he definitely helped us attain our goals.

HP: What first inspired you guys to start playing this kind of heavy rock? After all, five years ago metal wasn't exactly the happening thing.

JFY: It's a much stronger atmosphere at the moment because there are so many good bands out there. It's a very exciting time for us because we're too young to have lived through previous times when our kind of music was very popular. But what inspired us? I guess that would be the fact that we all share a love for great rock and roll, and when you throw in the diverse musical styles that fill the area we live in—everything from blues to rock and bluegrass—you begin to understand why we've developed the kind of style we have.

HP: When did you begin writing the material that's featured on this album?

JFY: Some of it goes back a number of years, while some other songs were written just a few months before we went into the studio. What's good is that we've really had time to get them to sound just the way we want them to, and then when we got the chance to record 'em they kept all the energy and edge that we wanted.

HP: Now that you're on the road, how have you sensed initial fan response to your music?

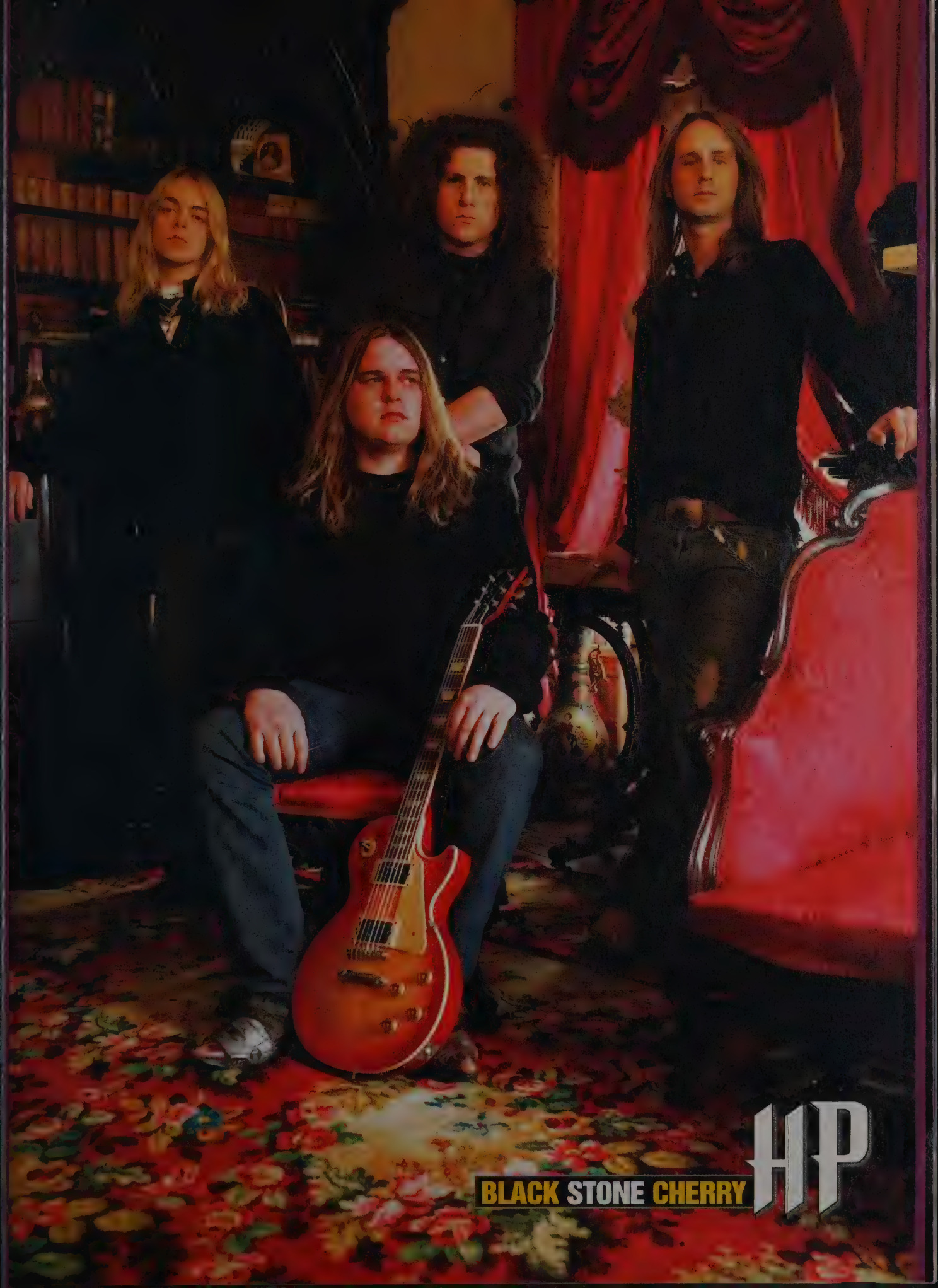
JFY: It's been very rewarding. As you might expect, most of the time we go on stage early, and a lot of people may not be that familiar with us. But since the album came out in July we've noticed a definite change in the way people are reacting—more of them are there early to check us out, and they really get into the music. That's meant a great deal to us.

HP: Was having to win crowds over a difficult thing for you?

JFY: (Laughing) Man, we've been doing that our entire lives! When you play in clubs down from where we're from, you've got to win them over every night. You can't sit back on what you might have done the night before. Those people know music and love music and they don't give you the chance to take a night off. We're very used to people giving us a very honest reaction. So we've always embraced the idea of going out on stage and proving ourselves at every show. To be honest, we almost feel a little uncomfortable when a lot of people are behind us right from the start.

HP: You've been on the road quite a bit over the last few months. What's the wildest thing that's happened to you?

JFY: Hey, we're young and we like having fun, but I've got to admit that our focus has been on making music so much that we haven't really had time for anything too wild to happen. But hopefully there'll be plenty of time for that in the future.



BLACK STONE CHERRY

HP

SLAYER

Taking no prisoners

BY DAVE NOLAN

Tom Araya wasn't feeling particularly well. It was a little before noon on a warm summer's morning back in early July— still a few weeks before the start of Slayer's *Unholy Alliance* road trek— and the dark-haired bassist/vocalist was a little ticked off about how long it was taking him to recover from recent gall bladder surgery. The normally laid-back frontman was quick to admit that his forced "down time" hadn't come at particularly good point... right at the end of his recording sessions with guitarists Kerry King and Jeff Hanneman and drummer Dave Lombardo for Slayer's new album, *Christ Illusion*. And the emergency surgery had also forced the band to reschedule the first two weeks of *Unholy Alliance* shows, pushing the tour's start back until the end of July, and extending the band's arena outing with Mastodon and Lamb of God well into August. It all added up to a rather major headache— as well as a lingering stomach ache— for this renowned heavy metal veteran.

"This surgery *really* didn't come at a good time," Araya said. "In fact, it probably couldn't have come at a worse time. But what am I gonna do? I had been in pain for quite a while, and the doctor told me that if I went on the road like that, and something happened, it could really be bad. It was the time to take care of it— before we started what's probably going to be a solid year on the road. I apologize to anyone it may have inconvenienced— especially fans who had tickets for the first few shows of *Unholy Alliance*— but I promise we'll make it up to them."

Make it up, indeed! With the results of Slayer's new studio masterwork (their first since 2001's *God Hates Us All*) now rocketing up the sales charts faster than any previous band release, and their *UA* tour blasting ear drums from coast-to-coast, it clearly appears as if nothing—including unexpected surgery— can slow down this legendary L.A.-based Crunch Bunch from continuing their full-out assault on the senses. And, in all honesty, could the Slay-masters possibly have chosen a better time to return to the metal kingdom? With the style of pure, unadulterated rock that they helped pioneer some 25 years ago now returning to the epicenter of the public eye, who better to lead metal's latest charge up the rock and roll mountain than the most demonic, intense and overwhelming band ever to reside this-side of Hades?

"We're lucky that our style of music seems to be somewhat popular again," Araya said. "That is, of course, if it *ever* was that popular! It always goes through ups-and-downs, and right now it seems like it's definitely in an 'up' tick. I like to think we've helped make that happen, but so have a lot of the young bands out there. It's great to be on the road with groups like Mastodon and Lamb of God because they're very heavy, but they're heavy in a different way than we are. It helps show the diversity of heavy metal."

As successful as their inaugural *Unholy Alliance* road outing has proven to be (and, in case you've been living under a rock for the last few months... NEWS FLASH: Slayer plan on making this metal-fest an annual event!) it's *Christ Illusion* that has been causing even more of a stir. Following in the noble metal tradition established by such previous masterworks as *South Of Heaven*, *Seasons In The Abyss* and their classic *Reign In Blood*, Slayer's latest offering is nothing less than a bashing, brutal, and brilliant heavy metal showcase. On such songs as *Catalyst*,

"This surgery *really* didn't come at a good time."

Jihad and *Eyes of the Insane*, the band has "upped" even their formidable metal ante, going for the music jugular time-after-time... and invariably hitting their mark.

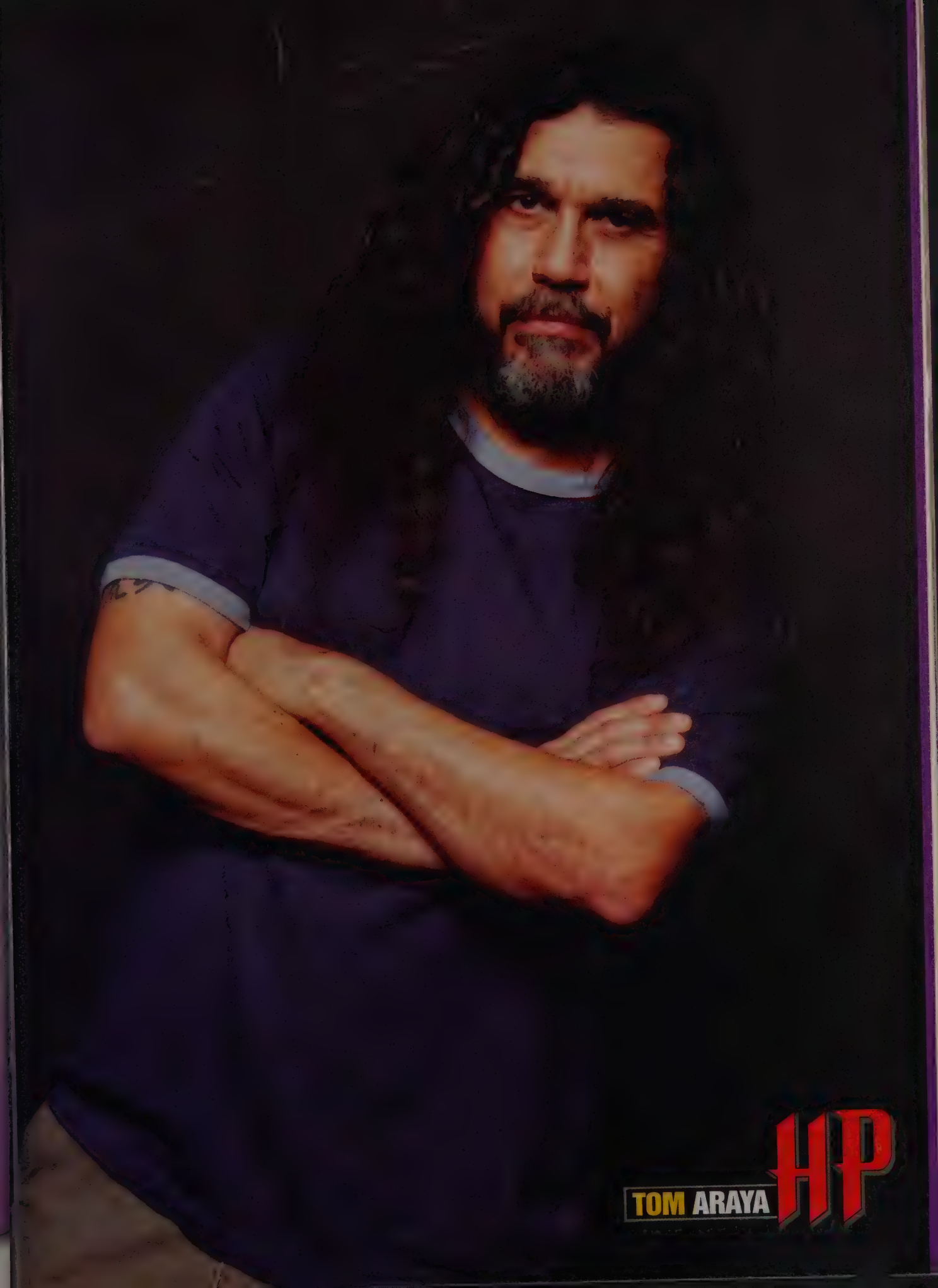
"We're not about to change up what we do very much at this point in our lives," Araya said. "But at the same time, whenever we go in to record a new album, we know new stuff is gonna happen, and we welcome it. You put this album on, and you know right away that it's a Slayer album, but as you listen to it, you begin to realize that there are a few things going on that you might not have expected... that's good! We didn't go into the studio with a lot of extra songs— basically we recorded just what we knew we wanted to be on the album."

Clearly, the emergence of a new Slayer album is always a note-worthy occurrence in heavy metal circles— especially in light of the band's, shall we say "infrequent" trips into the confines of the recording studio. But, rather amazingly, despite the fact that the group members are all now well into their 40s, with admittedly "sedate" home lives and plenty of mundane activities clogging up their day-to-day agendas, when they choose to join forces as Slayer, their metallic "super-powers" appear to be very much intact. Araya is understandably proud of the fact that neither the passage of time, nor the ever-changing face of the rock and roll landscape has deterred Slayer from continuing to deliver the most lethal metal music ever heard on Planet Earth.

"It's still an amazing feeling to have all of us in one place making an album," Araya said. "Especially now that Dave (Lombardo) is back on board, the focus is incredible. Nothing is ever forced with us. Once we all get together, it all seems to come to us very naturally. I think we realized a long time ago that this is who we are as people, and this is what we are as a band, and that's not about to change. We're already looking ahead towards what we're gonna do next."

Those future plans now seem to include an extended world tour— hitting markets in Europe, the Orient, and perhaps even South America— which will pick up at the end of *The Unholy Alliance* and carry Slayer throughout the remainder of 2006. At that point the band will again hit the road in North America, visiting cities missed by their *UA* trek, and revisiting places that remain particular band strongholds. And as he continues to recover from his recent surgery ("The doctors say it may take four months for me to feel back-to-normal") Araya insists that while a seemingly never-ending tour may sound a bit intimidating, he knows in his heart and soul that Slayer's music will only grow louder, stronger and more powerful as the road trek drags on.

"Once we're on the road, our total focus goes into each night's show," he said. "We've learned how to handle the down time and how to maintain our energy as best we can. All the travel can get to you, but we've done this before, so we know how it goes. The key for us is to feed off of the crowd's energy every night, and hope that they feed off of ours, as well."



TOM ARAYA

HP

FROM THE HIT PARADER

VAULT

Each month we bring you an incredible feature direct from the voluminous **Hit Parader** vault—an article that appeared on these hallowed pages exactly ten years ago! Without changes, editing or updates, these stories provide an amazing glimpse into this thing we call rock and roll, dealing with the form's most famous—and in some cases, infamous—stars. So direct from our DEC, 1996 issue is this “vintage” interview with the inimitable KISS.

So what's next for Kiss? Following an unprecedented six month period during which these hallowed Costumed Crusaders virtually dominated the media spotlight with their Alive '96/97 world tour, the questions surrounding Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons, Ace Frehley and Peter Criss have now turned towards the future. Will the incredible fan response generated by the “original” Kiss reunion lead to a new era of group studio recordings? Will the estimated \$70 million grossed by the band so far from ticket receipts, merchandising revenues and back catalog disc sales be enough to have these middle-aged rockers finally call it a day at the renewed peak of their powers? Or will Kiss, true to their mercurial nature, once again throw us all a major league curve ball and do something totally unexpected?

“I've got to be honest with you,” Stanley said. “I don't have a clue about what's going to happen next. If I told you I did I'd be lying to you. Right now all I'm trying to do is take everything one day at a time and enjoy it all to the maximum. Why should I start worrying about what *might* happen a year from now when I'm having the best time of my life right now? The fact is that we've still got at least six more months—and probably a lot more than that—on the road, and then after that who knows? The demand for our time all over the world has been incredible. We're already booked for sold-out shows in Europe and Japan, and then after that we may go on to South America, Australia and even to parts-unknown. Then maybe we'll do another tour of North America, hitting some places we missed the first time around. If everything goes according to plan, we won't have to even *think* about what comes next until early 1998!”

With Kiss having already completed the most successful North American tour of the year, with their 70 city summer spectacular ranking as one of the highest grossing road excursions in rock history, as Stanley indicated the band has indeed

moved on to conquering new horizons. Their shows at the historic Budokan in Tokyo have supposedly caused near-riots in Japan, with scalped tickets going for the U.S. equivalent of \$1,000 and up. Similar Kiss hysteria has gripped Europe and South America, where millions of fans have petitioned local authorities demanding that the band be allowed—if not actually *forced*—to perform. For their part, Kiss is all-too-willing to go wherever the demand—and the concert revenues—are the greatest. No matter what they may say, this tour ain't about art, buster, it's about raking in the almighty dollar, and when it comes to high-finance banking, Kiss have once again proven to be rock and roll's master manipulators.

“I know that the money question is a very sensitive one for Gene and Paul,” a tour insider revealed. “And I honestly think that they would have done this tour for free, just because they've gotten off so much on all the attention it's caused. But Gene is an incredible businessman, and he wasn't going to let an opportunity like this pass by without taking full advantage of it. They've got all the angles covered—the merchandise, the media tie-ins, everything. They're great at that.”

With Kiss leather jackets going for \$500, “official” **Destroyer** and **Alive** platinum albums checking in for \$600, and a battery of T-shirts, hats, pins and paraphernalia all priced to move, the Kiss reunion has proven to be nothing short of a financial bonanza for Simmons and Stanley—and to a lesser degree for Criss and Frehley as well. During all this time, however, as Kissmania has once again swept the face of Planet Earth in a way it hasn't done since the band's heyday in 1977, two souls have become forgotten parts of the Kiss landscape—guitarist Bruce Kulick and drummer Eric Singer.

While at tour's start both Simmons and Stanley boldly stated that their long-time comrades had enthusiastically endorsed this Kiss reunion and had supported it with every ounce of





strength in their body, the sad fact was that by mid-August both musicians had announced their departure from Kiss. Whether the pair chose to leave the comfortable confines of Kiss on their own, or were forced out by Simmons and Stanley, remains unknown. Speculation is rampant, however, that Kulick and Singer were told in no-uncertain-terms that their services were no longer required as soon as Kiss was sure that the "reunion" tour was indeed going to be an on-going venture. The fact that Singer and Kulick had already recorded what was supposed to be Kiss' next studio album with Simmons and Stanley proved to be no solace considering that these guys have now had to resort to scrounging out a meager living by performing clinics at a time when their former bandmates are making a financial killing.

"Bruce and Eric really got burned," a music industry source revealed. "Kiss is making millions on this tour, and they're gonna get nothing from it. Don't forget that Bruce spent more than 12 years in Kiss. That's longer than Ace was in the band! In fact, if Eric hadn't shown so much enthusiasm for having Peter sit in during one of the Kiss Convention shows we performed last year, this whole reunion may never have occurred."

Perhaps such praise is small solace to Kulick and Singer. And while their departure from Kiss probably could have been handled better than it was last August, the fact is that Simmons and Stanley had little choice but to rejoin forces with Criss and Frehley once they discovered that their former bandmates were indeed clean, sober and ready to rock. If Kiss had maintained their early '90s lineup, and toured behind a new albums without their trademark makeup, concert promoters around the nation have predicated that the band would have perhaps been able to fill 3,000 seat halls on a nightly basis.

By realigning with Ace and Peter, and once again donning their face paint, Kiss suddenly became the hottest concert attraction on Earth, a band capable of selling out ballparks and playing no less than four nights at New York's Madison Square Garden (where the 75,000 available tickets sold out in an unbelievable 55 minutes.) So while some may criticize Simmons and Stanley for their apparent "disloyalty" to Singer and Kulick, million of Kiss Army charter members have cheered the move as long overdue. In their minds their has always only been—and will always only be—one Kiss; Gene, Paul, Ace and Peter. It is those fans who are reveling most in the band's historic return.

"This is Kiss," Stanley said. "I realized that the first time we all stood in a rehearsal hall last spring trying to figure out exactly how we were going to proceed. In the past I may have had my problems with Peter and Ace, and they may have had their problems with me. But now, 17 years later, I'm very happy to say that we've all turned out to be pretty good people. That might be the most rewarding thing to come out of this tour—the realization that the brotherhood of Kiss is as strong as the fans always wanted it to be."

THEY SAID IT!!!

Rock stars have a tendency to say the outrageous... the fascinating... the insightful.... the amusing. All they really need is a little prodding in the right direction. That's our job here at **Hit Parader**. We call the results of our efforts, *They Said It!*

"One of the things I like is that you can go back to any of the albums we made with Bon (Scott) and then put on something we did yesterday and I think you instantly know it's AC/DC. That's very important to us. Each time we go into the studio we may be looking at some changes— but nothing major."
ANGUS YOUNG, AC/DC

"I am definitely an observer of humanity. But most of my creativity is spurred by my own imagination. Few things I've ever seen or experienced can match what the mind can come up with."
ROB ZOMBIE

"It's hard not to hear people talking about you and your music. But I try not to listen. I guess we responded to all that talk by doing our best to ignore it. We're not here to please the critics. Our goal from the very beginning of the writing process for an album is to try and excite ourselves with the music we're making. We never want to get too comfortable with what we've become as a band. We don't want to read the press clippings saying how great we supposedly are. We won't allow making music to become easy for us. A lot of bands probably go with their initial instinct. We don't necessarily do that. We think about it, change things up, then make our move."
CHINO MORENO, DEFTONES

"Everyone who knows Mudvayne knows that we owe a lot to Slipknot in terms of getting some early recognition. But they haven't been an issue for us for a long time. Anyone who thinks we dropped our makeup because of them just doesn't understand what makes us tick. We did it for a very simple and basic reason; it was the right time for us to do it."
MATT McDONOUGH, MUDVAYNE

"We're definitely a heavy band— but not your typical heavy band. We're musicians and songwriters first, a heavy band next. We like to think we combine it all to emerge with something that's distinctly Taproot."
STEPHEN RICHARDS, TAPROOT

"We know that fans come to hear the songs they like, and we don't want to disappoint them. At this point in our career, with so many albums done, it becomes a real challenge to put together a set that reflects what we want to do and what the fans want us to do. But it can be done.. and it will be done."
JONATHAN DAVIS, KORN

"I think we all sense that there's a great desire all over the world to hear the kind of music Maiden plays. Even in the States— where they can be a bit fickle at times— the music is making a great resurgence."
BRUCE DICKINSON, IRON MAIDEN

"It's cool that we hear those comparisons to Metallica, or Sabbath, or Maiden. What could be better than that? We all love those bands, and to be mentioned in the same breath with them is an incredible compliment. But there comes a point in a band's career when they have to stop being the next Metallica and become the first."
MASTODON, BRANN DAILOR, MASTODON

"I am somewhat optimistic that there will be a future for Sabbath. There were times in the recent past when I really didn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. Ozzy didn't seem to be into it, and I just didn't know if we would ever be able to get Sabbath going again. But at the end of the last *Ozzfest*, we all had a very nice chat, and it seemed as if everyone

was very happy and quite committed to continuing on in some capacity in the future."
TONY IOMMI, BLACK SABBATH

"A lot of the music I hear today is following a rather conventional verse-chorus-verse formula, and while we do that to on occasion, throughout this album we played with song structures, and the timing in which the songs were

Rob Zombie



played, and that yielded some very interesting results. We can't think 'Is this song going to make the label enough money?' It's important to us to be successful, but we've got to be proud of what we create as well."
SHAUN MORGAN, SEETHER

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Things are hotter than ever in the world of Slipknot. Indeed, in many ways this is the start of a new day, a new era and possibly a new revolution for the one and only Knot. For d.j. Sid Wilson, bassist Paul Gray, guitarist James Root, drummer Joey Jordison, keyboardist Craig Jones, percussionist Chris Fehn, percussionist Shawn "Clown" Crahan, guitarist Mick Thompson and vocalist Corey Taylor (also known to their ever-loyal followers as 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) it's time to focus all of their collective energies into once again becoming the most infamous heavy metal band on Earth. Now with the appearance of their new album, Vol. 3 (The Subliminal Verses), and the start of their various world-wide tours, you'd have to be both blind and deaf not to note that this coverall-wearing, mask-bearing, hard rocking unit from the wilds of Des Moines, Iowa, has returned to the scene just in time to give the entire metal world a much needed kick in the pants. With all that in mind, Hit Parader offers this salute to the one and only Slipknot in the form of our incredible poster special. This is one you don't want to miss!

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SLIPKNOT AD

Metal Musings

BY MIKE G

For 17 years Mike Greenblatt was the editor of *Metal Maniacs* magazine. During that time he was in constant contact with the metal musicians who inhabit the outer extremes of the hard rock world. Now he brings his voluminous knowledge—as well as his deft writing skills—to the pages of *Hit Parader*.—Ed.

Finland. It's cold. Bleak. It's the only country that could've produced the sorrow and despair of the gloomy **POISONBLACK**—guitarist/vocalist Ville Laihiala (ex-Sentenced), guitarist Jannine Markus, keyboardist Marco Sneek, bassist Antti Remes and drummer Tarmo Kanerva. Now, with the release of **Lust Stained Despair** (Century Media), this melancholic quintet with the former Sentenced guy as its singer gets as goth as goth allows while still hard-charging it with a furious ROCK assault.

Ville wanted out of Sentenced bigtime to play guitar and pursue this vision. Poisonblack's first album—2003's **Escapexstacy**—was received well but the band couldn't tour because of various members' main bands. Now that Sentenced has been sentenced to death, the sky's the limit for Poisonblack.

Want **HOSTILITY**? **Uncompromised** (The Pen/Voltaic Records) doesn't let up for 12 tracks in a row. Singer Greg Haran should need a new pair of tonsils by the time he finishes touring in support of this monster. Guitarist Tony Vorrises says, "We really live this shit 24-7. It's a way of life for us." Believe him. Mixed by Colin Richardson (Slipknot, Chimaira, Machine Head), the bass of Brandon Sigmund and the drums of Andrew Holzbaur mesh as one. Think Pantera/Sepultura/Cannibal Corpse and you've got the right idea as to where they're going.

Haran, who formed the band when still in high school (in 1998), says, "**Uncompromised** was the obvious choice for the name of our first album. Our goal has never changed, our commitment has never wavered. We've always been the band we wanted to be." It's first song, *Without A Chance*, according to Haran, "is about learning to play the hand you're dealt, overcoming your own perceived downfall, and not succumbing to other people's labels or attempts to categorize you." Another track, *Common Ground*, according to Vorrises, "is our 'fuck everybody' song. It's about living life without boundaries. It's about non-conformity. Stick to your guns and go for whatever it is that you want. We have a 'take-no-prisoners' attitude," concludes the guitarist. "We're all about our music, our shows and raging with the fans."

INTO ETERNITY—guitarist/vocalist Tim Roth, lead vocalist Stu Block, bassist Troy Bleich and drummer Jim Austin—use both clean and death vocals on their decidedly progressive **The Scattering Of Ashes** (Century Media). This Canadian quartet has improved dramatically since 2004's **Buried In Oblivion**, 2002's **Dead Or Dreaming** and 2000's eponymous debut. Combining thrash, prog, power, death, doom

and trad, these ... **Ashes** tell the story of the grief that accompanies realization as death starts a cycle of memory. Mixed and mastered by Andy Sneap (Arch Enemy, Killswitch Engage), this 11-cut journey—highlights include *Severe Emotional Distress*, *Pain Through Breathing* and *Paralyzed* (not the Elvis song, haha)—is a virtual roller coaster of sound.

CATACOMBS are in **The Depths Of R'Lyeh** on its debut *Moribund Cult* CD. It ain't exactly a pretty place to be. This is one of those one-man projects, in this case the man being Xathagorra. This X man has been spewing forth the doom and death since his 1996 band Hierophant. They say he's as extreme in his personal life as he is on record but we won't go there. Suffice it to say that X goes for the lowest tones, the darkest themes and the heaviest riffs possible on his five-record career thus far. This is the second from Catacombs, the first being an EP with only a hint of the promise to come. Influenced by such underground word-of-mouth bands as Disembowelment, Unholy, Skepticism, Therogoth and Winter, **In The Depths Of R'Lyeh** is uncompromising, dirty, disgusting, dank, putrid, fetid and totally eviscerating, in other words, the real deal.

The band is **COLDSEED**. The album is **Completion Makes The Tragedy** (Nuclear Blast). It's a big sound, filled with the keyboards of Mi Schuren, the raging guitars of Thorsten Praest and Gonzalo Alfageme Lopez, the stop-on-a-dime rhythm section of drummer Thomen Stauch and bassist Oli Holzwarth. If Speed Strid slows things down with his over-the-top grating vocals, that's at least part of the game in this kind of music. Stauch, though, more than makes up for it. The ex-Blind Guardian beatmaster has been pulling double duty of late, beating the skins for both Coldseed and Savage Circus. This Spanish/German/Swedish group piles the harmonies atop the melodies to create a Power not quite all their own, but close to it.

And finally, **JIM GLEASON** has written over 500 original songs since he was 15, self-releasing 30 of those songs on three CDs. He's received college radio airplay and three of his songs—*Justice*, *Tried & True* and *Loser's Pace*—have been used as background music to *The Great American Trivia Game*, a national inter-active game distributed to over 1,000 outlets. Ween plays his *Dirty Window* in concert. *You And I*, *Revolution Suicide* and *I Deserve More* are universal in scope and irresistible in their catchy melodic invention.

As frontman for New Jersey's hard-rocking Jim Gleason Band, he opened for Who bassist John Entwistle and The Wallflowers, among other headliners. "Music is the greatest form of communication," he tells *Hit Parader*, "and it is the most natural way for me to exist and relate to others. Many songs have touched me in such a profound way, it's hard to describe. I'm putting my innermost feelings, fears and thoughts out there for all to hear so that maybe I can affect someone the way music has affected me. Being a songwriter and artist is not something that I want to do, it is who I am."

Sometimes pure unadulterated talent is all it takes.



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Heaven and Hell A Touch of Black

BY ERIC NASH



"Working with Ronnie again has been a revelation."

The rumors started back in October... talk that guitarist Tony Iommi and vocalist Ronnie James Dio had decided to work together again. From there, things seemed to take on a life of their own. Soon bassist Geezer Butler became part of the project, as did drummer Bill Ward. Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, after nearly 15 years years apart, the *second* most famous Black Sabbath lineup of all time had come back together... but it wasn't *really* Black Sabbath, was it? You see, when that band first reformed with original vocalist Ozzy Osbourne back in 1996, the Ozzy all-knowing, all-seeing wife/manager Sharon, had put it in writing that unless the unit consisted of Osbourne, Iommi, Butler and Ward it couldn't be called Black Sabbath. So what were Dio, Iommi, Butler and Ward to do... especially with the lingering promise of Sabbath once again recording and touring with Ozzy being waved in their ever-eager faces? Well, they decided to christen their "new" band Heaven And Hell, and they quickly went to work on making some music.

"At their root, our personality conflicts always had our intense desire to create great music. That's still our goal."

foursome realized that there was still metal magic housed within their collective souls. Not only did they find that they wanted to record together, but they wanted to tour, as well. What to do, especially with the looming presence of Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne looking over their shoulders? After a bit of tossing and turning, the solution of calling themselves Heaven And Hell—perhaps their best-known song as a unit—struck them as the perfect answer for this potentially sticky situation.

"This all came together in a very natural and wonderful way," Dio stated. "When word got out that the label wanted to release *Black Sabbath: The Dio Years*, Tony and I knew that we wanted to make it something truly special. The only way we could think of doing that was by recording a few new songs. As soon as we started working on those songs, I realized that I had missed working with Tony, and what a truly incredible guitarist he is."

Rather ironically, it didn't take the Osbournes long to get wind of the new *non-Sabbath* project. Within days of the original Dio-Iommi partnership coming together, the Osbourne camp seemed to simultaneously bless and then dismiss the project with the following statement: "Tony Iommi and Ronnie Dio are working on a project

together which has nothing to do with Black Sabbath. There is only one Black Sabbath. Ozzy, Tony, Geezer and Bill will be touring late next year (2007) along with a new Black Sabbath album. However, Ozzy wishes Tony and Ronnie much success in their project together."

Hmmm... talk about back-handed tidings. At times it almost seems as if Sharon and Ozzy are like those spoiled kids in the sandbox who want to hog *all* the toys. After all, exactly when is Ozzy supposed to record this new disc with Sabbath? He hasn't even finished recording his long-overdue solo disc... one that was originally supposed to be released prior to the start of his headlining *Ozzfest* run last summer. So are we to believe that in 2007 the ever-more-reclusive Mr. Osbourne is supposed to finish recording that solo disc, tour behind it, then record a new album with Sabbath and hit the road in support of that effort? Unlikely... especially since Sabbath has tried on countless occasions to record a new album ever since Ozzy relearned with them a decade ago.

"It seems that Sharon and Ozzy are determined to protect their turf," said one insider. "They control the Sabbath name, but they can't control with Tony, Bill and Geezer do. If they want to record and tour with Dio, they can obviously do so... they just can't call it Black Sabbath. But who are they kidding? Everyone knows exactly who and what it is. You know the old expression... if it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it's probably a duck. Same goes for Sabbath."

But before we get too carried away with all this Sabbath (and *non-Sabbath*) talk, let's go back in time and investigate exactly why the pairing of Dio and his former Sabbath brethren is such big news in heavy metal circles. During Dio's first four-year stint with the band from '80 to '84 (he returned to record *Dehumanizer* in the early '90s), Sabbath recorded two of their all-time best discs, *Heaven And Hell* and *Mob Rules*. But personality conflicts soon got in the way, and the group broke asunder, with Dio then launching his own band and Iommi beginning a lengthy musical odyssey with an ever-shifting core of Sabbath members—a sojourn that would last until Ozzy's prodigal return in 1996.

"It has been interesting to get this lineup together, and the kind of music we've been able to make over the last few months has been simply incredible," Iommi said. "Working with Ronnie again has been a revelation."

Those metal fans who've followed the Sabbath story over the years may be somewhat surprised that Dio and Iommi have decided to work together again—not that it's any more surprising than Ozzy and Tony again functioning as a team after their once-bitter acrimony. At the time of Dio's original departure from Sabbath, the difficulties the pair suffered through had become part of metal lore. It was widely reported at the time that the two head-strong rockers couldn't agree on anything; Iommi felt Dio was trying to take over the band, while Dio insisted that Iommi was out to get him—even going so far as to state that the guitarist purposely misspelled his name on the band's *Live/Evil* in-concert album.

"There were many things said at that time," Dio explained. "But I think Tony and I always had a respect for one another. I look back on my time in that band very fondly. At their root, our personality conflicts always had our intense desire to create great music. That's still our goal."

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OZZFEST AD



HP
BUCKCHERRY

on the road with Black Label Society

BY TYLER HUDSON

The leather-and-chains-clad crowd could have been mistaken for the attendees of a Daytona Beach biker rally. But this somewhat misbegotten crew had all gathered together in this exact place at this exact time for a different reason—a very different reason. They had come to check out the latest incarnation of Zakk Wyld's power packed unit, Black Label Society, and from the look of things, they were ready for just about anything, or anyone, that might come their way. Indeed, in the middle of a sea of mosh pits, it seemed that the number of tattoos on the men was only rivaled by those adorning their women-folk.

From the first deafening sounds of six-string distortion barreling through a solid mountain of Marshall amps, the crowd knew they were about to be blessed with a special evening of ear-blasting excitement. BLS—comprised of Wyld (who fills every gap in the band, from keyboards to lead vocals to guitar), guitarist Nick Catanese, bassist John DeServio and drummer Craig Nunenmacher—took the stage and rocked with a sense of hell-bent fury that left even this seen-it-all-before rock and roll gathering in jaw-jacked awe.

The crowd remained on their feet from first note to last, with their non-stop fist pumping action carrying them all to the point of near exhaustion. And just when they thought the show couldn't get any hotter, heavier or crazier, the crowd-surfing began, turning the entire front-stage area into the metal equivalent of some bizarre "X-Games" competition. Despite the constant distractions presented by their rowdy audience, the show raged on as BLS maintained an energy level powerful enough to keep the Las Vegas strip aglow for a month. From folk-infused metal songs like *Crazy or High* to the downright dirty hard rockers drawn directly from albums spanning the group's entire career—including a healthy dose of material pulled from their

latest CD, *Shot to Hell*—the Black Label boys pulled out all the stops. They gave the crowd just what they wanted: a kick-ass concert that offered no quarter and took no prisoners.

"When we get on stage, there's a focus that's almost scary,"

Wyld had said shortly before taking the stage. "Almost anything could happen in the crowd and we wouldn't really notice. Believe, me, we've got enough happening on stage to maintain our total attention."

While everyone in the band was given plenty of room to shine, there was no question about who was the star of that evening's proceedings. With his mane of blond hair flying around his long, lean frame, Wyld was the constant center of attention. His unique look was highlighted by his numerous signature guitars, including his classic bull's eye axe and his legendary confederate-flag-adorned Gibson Les Paul. It was all enough to bring a righteous rebel yell out in the most loyal damn yankees around.

True to his back-to-basics rock and roll ideals (many first learned during his stint with metal madman, Ozzy Osbourne, with whom he recently completed recording a new album) there were few parlor tricks or fancy effects to mar the pure, sonic impact of Wyld's style. This was clearly one show not designed to appeal to the faint-of-heart. And if truth be known, Wyld wouldn't have wanted it any

other way.

"The people who come to a Black Label Society show know what to expect," he said as he cooled off in his post concert dressing room. "In fact, we'd better deliver what they expect or we're the ones who could end up in trouble."



PHOTO: TYLER HUDSON

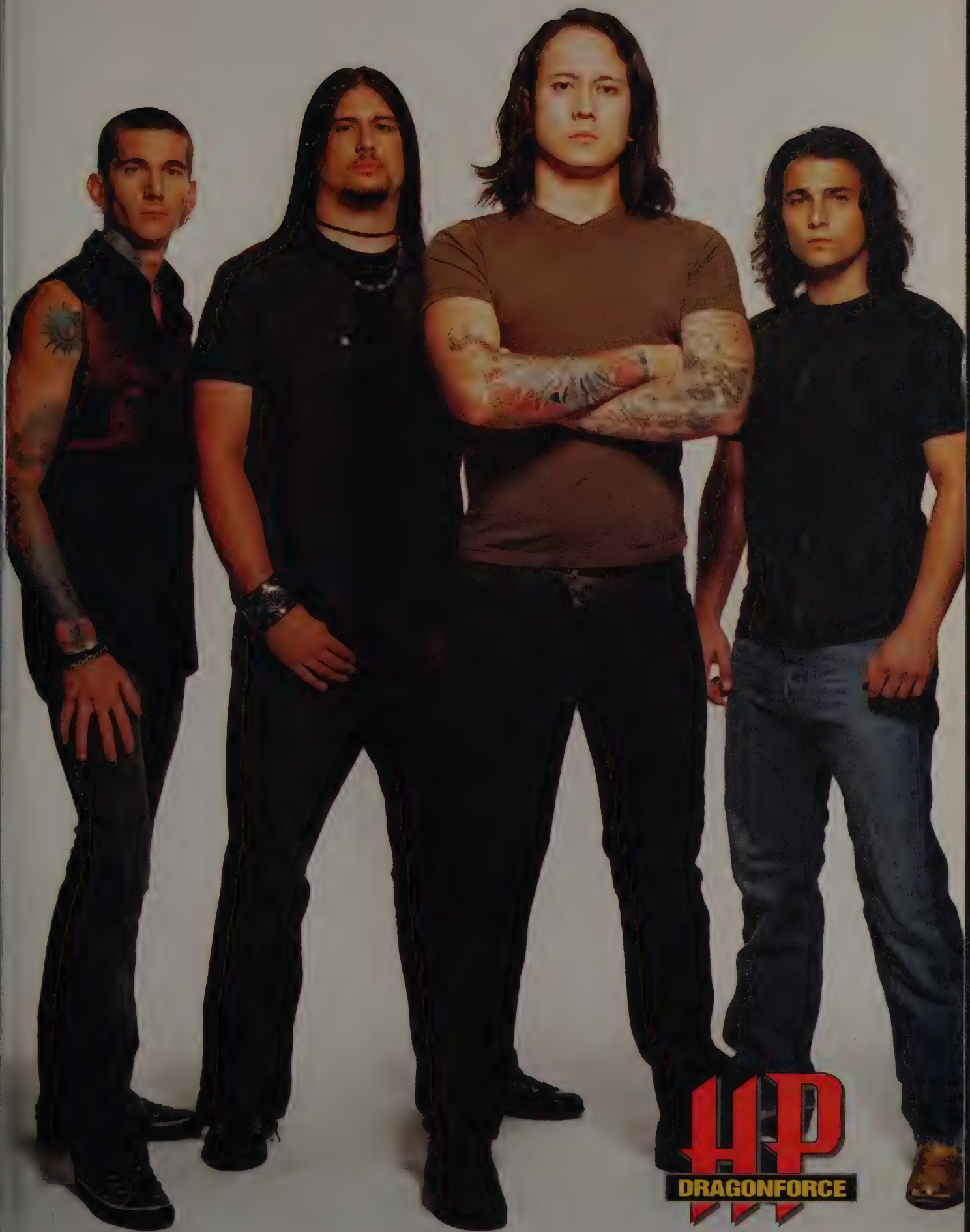




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BY FRANK CAFIERO

EDDIE OJEDA: AXES 2

Some things will never change... when heavy metal is running through your veins, you live in New York and you are the axe-man of one of the world's most provocative bands... you will always wanna rock!

Eddie Ojeda is best known for all the years he has spent as the lead guitarist for Twisted Sister. After years of creating a name for themselves in bars and clubs in the New York area, Twisted eventually toured the world from Japan to Canada, Europe to Australia. Eddie played on eleven albums (which earned a combined 25 gold and platinum records worldwide) and performed in over 4000 shows, opening for groups such as Iron Maiden, Dio, ZZTop, Whitesnake, and Motorhead. Ronnie Dio chose Eddie to perform alongside Neal Schon, Yngwie Malmsteen, George Lynch, and many other great musicians in the "Hearing Aid" video—Heavy Metal's contribution to the African Relief Fund. During the Twisted period Eddie was featured in the motion picture *Pee Wee Herman's Big Adventure*, gave interviews to radio stations across the country, and was recognized in the book, *Who's Who in Rock'n'Roll*.

Eddie Ojeda in his first solo album has nothing to prove. The whole metal scene knows his performing and song writing abilities. He wrote songs with all his great friends in mind. For instance when he wrote *Tonight* (a magnificent opening track with the mighty Ronnie James Dio on vocals) he knew exactly how to make it a hit and how it could fit Ronnie's voice. When he re-arranged the classic Beatles *Eleanor Rigby* (actually transformed it into a heavy metal avalanche!) he knew that Dee Snider's powerful and enormous throat would make it one of the classic covers ever made! The same goes for all the songs. One by one, after our thirsty ears, they are emerging straight from the heart of the legendary *Fingers*.

Ladies and Gentlemen this is heavy metal! And heavy metal is all about celebrating our anger, our passion, our dreams and nightmares; it's about who we are and who will always be. *Axes 2 Axes* is THE heavy metal album; made by musicians who live and breath this music... made by some of those who first played it and lived it to the bone. And Eddie, with all his friends, truly mean it...

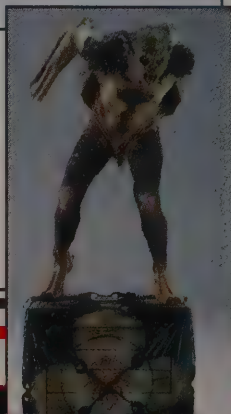


HP/McFarlane Giveaway!

Hit Parader Magazine and McFarlane Toys have once again teamed up for one frightful giveaway. Five lucky winners will be chosen at random to receive this special Dracula 2-pack. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola and based on Bram Stoker's classic *Dracula* novel, this classic film has an all-star cast including Gary Oldman, Keanu Reeves, Winona Ryder and Anthony Hopkins. Fans can expect the artists at **McFarlane Toys** to capture the details and magic from the popular movie in collectible, three-dimensional glory. This deluxe action figure 2-pack includes Dracula in two of his most frightening forms. As both giant Bat and Werewolf incarnations, The Prince of Darkness has never looked so evil.



All you have to do to win one of these horrific collector items is fill out the form on the right and tell us what your favorite scene is from **Bram Stoker's Dracula**. That's it!



NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____
ZIP _____ AGE _____

My favorite scene from Bram Stoker's Dracula is:

Send your entries to: **McFarlane Dracula Giveaway**,
HIT PARADER 210 ROUTE 4 EAST, Suite 211, PARAMUS, NJ 07652
Winners will be chosen at random.

All entries must be received by Dec. 20, 2006

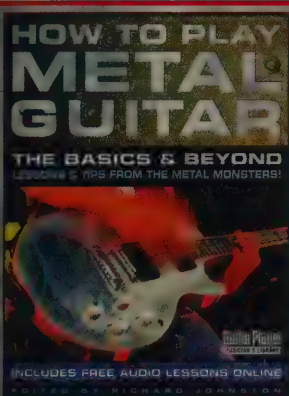
HOW TO PLAY METAL GUITAR

Driving the sound of guitar deeper, heavier, and faster, metal is the most intense music ever imagined. **How To Play Metal Guitar** gives you vital instruction in metal basics from top guitar teachers, and reveals the secrets of the monsters of metal—often in their own words.

Packed with musical examples, charts, and photos, this is your complete, step-by-step course for learning metal guitar. In-depth lessons with pros like Andy Ellis, Jesse Gress, Joe Gore, Jude Gold, and Dave Whitehill teach you to build your own style while exploring the classic and modern sounds of the metal masters. From supercharging your solos to creating killer riffs, **How To Play Metal Guitar** brings you:

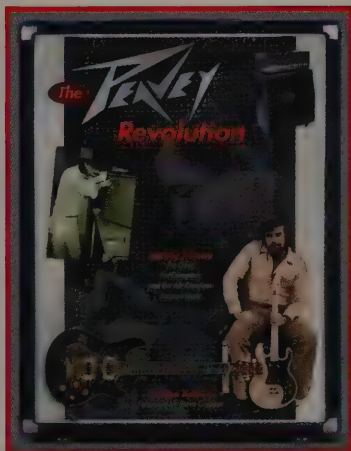
•Essential lessons on the basics of metal

- Tips on altered tunings and 7-string guitar
- Insights into the music of the masters
- The pros' secrets of tone and recording
- An inspiring discography of the monsters of metal past and present
- Free access to audio lessons at an exclusive Web page!



THE PEAVEY REVOLUTION

One of the most respected names in musical instruments, **Peavey** provides a complete range of high-quality yet affordable equipment while remaining a maverick in the industry. This is the inside story of the company and its colorful founder, Hartley Peavey. Peavey envisioned building top-quality instruments and equipment at affordable prices, and through ambition, creativity, and dogged persistence—and amid personal triumphs and tragedies—he realized his dream. From Hartley's early years to the company's 1965 founding to its emergence a global powerhouse, **The Peavey Revolution** is an engaging account of a unique Mississippian, his company, its products, and the players who have used them. For more info go to www.backbeatbooks.com.



HP DVD REVIEWS

AN AMERICAN HAUNTING



Based on the terrifying true story of the Bell Witch of Tennessee, **An American Haunting** takes viewers back to 1818 when the only recorded case of a spirit causing a death was documented. The hauntings, which took place over a 4 year span, slowly build from unexplained disturbances to more violent and horrific acts against the wealthy and highly respected Bell family, mostly singling out their young daughter. Ultimately, causing the death of one of its members then is never heard from again. The disturbing truth about the spirit's origin was not discovered until years later.

An America Haunting stars Donald Sutherland, Sissy Spacek, Rach Hurd-Wood and James D'Arcy as the victims of the poltergeist's rage.

Done in the tradition of classic horror films like **The Legend of Hell House**, **House on Haunted Hill** and **The Others**, **An American Haunting** will have you checking under your bed and sleeping with the lights on.

DVD special features include alternate and deleted scenes, Director Courtney Solomon's commentary and an interview with Sissy Spacek.

To Find out more go to www.lionsgatefilms.com

JU-ON 2

Tragedy strikes following a car crash that has Kyoko facing the loss of her boyfriend and her unborn child. However, soon after the accident, Kyoko still feels something moving inside of her, so she pays a visit to her doctor. To her surprise, he assures her that she is definitely still pregnant...but with what?

Yes, **Ju-On 2** is one creepy movie. Filled with demented images you won't soon forget, **Ju-On: The Grudge** and **Ju-On 2** are the original Japanese movies that inspired the hit U.S. versions of **The Grudge** and **The Grudge 2**.

Visionary director Takashi Shimizu pushes the envelope once again to shock us with disturbing images and eerie suspense. Shimizu keeps the viewer off balance and never quite sure of what exactly is going on until a jolt comes to scare the hell out of you.

To Find out more go to www.lionsgatefilms.com



TECH TALK WITH LACUNA COIL

BY P.J. MERKLE

Perhaps you recall the incredibly annoying TV commercial from a few years back where an over-pampered, pouty-lipped uber-model would moan seductively into the lens, "Don't hate me because I'm beautiful." Well, we don't want to be the ones to break the news, honey, but we hated you anyway! But in the case of beautiful Italian songstress Cristina Scabbia, vocalist for recent *Ozzfest* main-stagers Lacuna Coil, her dark, brooding looks have been both a blessing and a curse. As she continues to tour the world along with her band-mates—vocalist Andrea Ferro, guitarist Marco Biazzi, guitarist Cristiano Migliore, bassist Marco Coti Zelati and drummer Cristiano Mozzati—in support of LC's new album *Karmacode*, she knows that her striking appearance has garnered immediate attention in the eyes of many sex-starved young rock fans. But she is also painfully aware that her looks have made it twice as hard to win the respect of her metallic brethren. As her fame continues to rise (along with the pulse rates of her male following), we decided it would be the perfect time to have in intimate sit-down with the lovely Ms. Scabbia.

Hit Parader: What's the best thing about being an attractive women in rock... and the worst thing?

Cristina Scabbia: The best thing is that I stand out from most everyone else. People quickly learn who I am, and because of that they also learn about this band and the music we make. That has been a big advantage for me. But anyone who believes that any success we've had is just because of the way I look is not being fair to us, or to the fans who support us. Who would buy an album because of the way the singer looks? They have to buy it because they like the music they hear.

HP: So the worst thing is not being taken seriously enough?

CS: I honestly don't feel that has been a problem for me, but that would be the worst thing I could imagine happening. I have never had a problem showing off my feminine side, and I think everyone appreciates that. But that does not mean that I am trying to camouflage any musical weaknesses because of that. I am very fortunate because all the male rockers that I've met have treated me very fairly and very well. I have never felt any "backlash" because I am a woman.

HP: Paul Stanley of Kiss once said that you need "balls" to play hard rock—and we think he meant that literally. We assume you disagree?

CS: (Laughing) That is actually quite funny. Did he really say that? I think he probably meant it more in a figurative sense... otherwise it is quite silly. I think our music does have "balls" in that it is powerful and dramatic. But I don't think only men can effectively play hard rock music. In fact I *know* that is true. I would never want to sacrifice my femininity in order to succeed. Being a woman who

plays heavy music has always been a major help to me because it allows me to approach the music from an entirely different perspective, and that is a good thing. I understand that a vast majority of the people who play hard rock music are men, and that's fine with me. But as long as people approach me and the music this band makes with an open mind then I have no problems with any of it.

HP: *Karmacode* has proven to be a break-out album for Lacuna Coil. How has the band evolved since your last disc, *Comalies*?

CS: We were very lucky because we had the chance to spend over two years touring the world after the release of *Comalies*. When a band does something like that, it invariably gets better. In addition, we had been primarily in Europe prior to the release of that album, so we reflected out Italian heritage and the general taste in European rock music. But after being able to spend a year in America, it opened our eyes to many new things. We didn't necessarily want to sound like an American band on *Karmacode*, but we did want to take all that we had absorbed culturally and physically and make sure that the new music reflected that.

HP: But on this album we still hear traces of European classical music, as well as touches of everything from Arabian melodies to gothic chants.

CS: We haven't lost the soul of who we are as a band, so our European heritage is still strongly reflected in this music. But the rhythms are more powerful and the production is better. We owe both of those things to American rock styles. But our goal from the start of work on *Karmacode* was to create something that was distinctly Lacuna Coil—not something that could be titled "Lacuna Coil Goes To America." That wasn't the point at all.

HP: Do you worry that your fans back home will feel you "sold out" to American audiences?

CS: No, not at all. The fans in Europe have embraced us even more with this album. This is an album we've made for all the fans because they've been so incredibly supportive of us. They've waited a long time for us to return, so we wanted to make sure that the wait was worth it. Because of our background, we still approach music from a different perspective than American bands. While at heart we are very much a heavy rock band, there is an ethereal element to what we do that is distinctly Italian. We are all very glad that American fans seem to be embracing what we are attempting to accomplish.

HP: How important is success to you at this point in your life?

CS: We pray for success every day. It's not for the fame or money. It's truly more about having the chance to have more people hear our music. We want to reward those fans who have made our lives so special. The fans back home in Italy have all been so supportive of us. They take as much pride in our accomplishments as we do. There have been very few Italian bands that have been successful in the rock world. Our success is something that a whole nation is celebrating. We totally believe in what we're doing. We sense it is something special, and that feeling has thankfully been confirmed by many other people."

HP: Was your experience at *Ozzfest* in 2006 as rewarding as it was back in 2004?

CS: It was a very special experience on both occasions. More fans knew who we were this time, so our response was much better. That was very nice. We didn't feel as if we had to win everyone over every night. People actually seemed excited about seeing us play live. That was very rewarding for us because it told us that we have begun to accomplish many of our goals. But we know that we still have far, far to travel before we get to where we want to be as a band.

"I definitely stand out from most everyone else."

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LACUNA COIL

HP

INSTRUMENTALLY SPEAKING

BY MICHAEL SHORE COMPILED BY ILKO NECHEV

YAMAHA

Electric acoustic guitars, that mainstay of metal ballads among other kinds of music, present unique problems that seem to get bigger the louder your amplification has to be. Feedback and poor sound quality have long driven guitarists and soundmen nuts, whether trying to mic an un-amplified acoustic, or using one with built-in pickups. Now, Yamaha's raised the bar considerably for electric acoustic performance with its new APX Series. You could even say Yamaha's established a new state of the "A.R.T." in this area, since the key to their latest innovation is its new Acoustic Resonance Transducer, or A.R.T., pickup system.

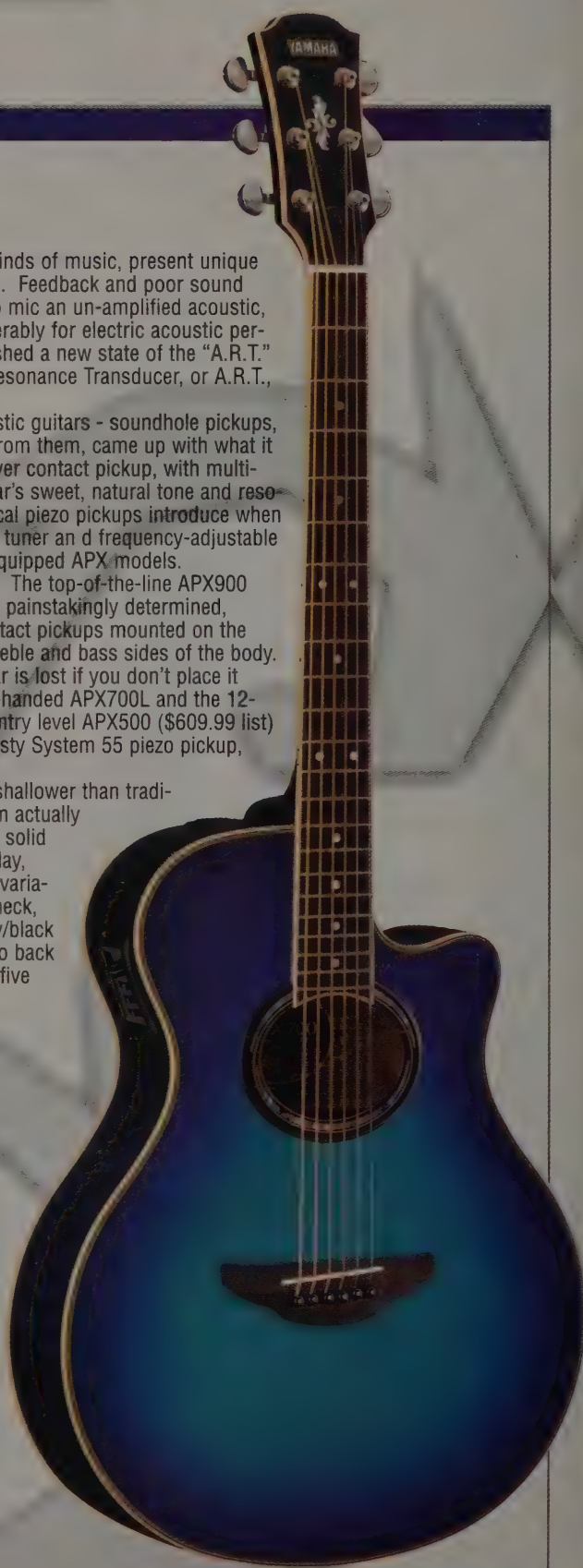
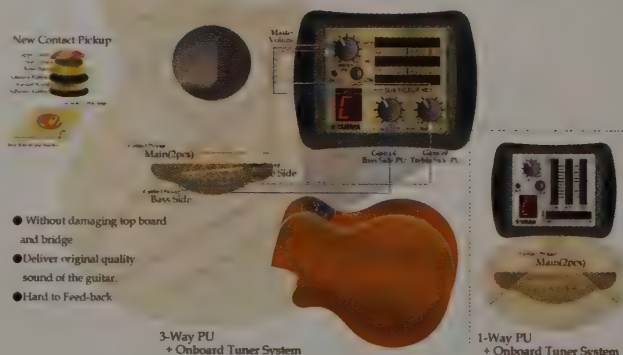
Yamaha studied all the available methods out there for amplifying acoustic guitars - soundhole pickups, piezo pickups in the bridge, contact-mic pickups on the body, etc. - and from them, came up with what it calls a revolutionary new system. The A.R.T. system uses a special six-layer contact pickup, with multi-layer dampening to control excessive vibrations while still letting the guitar's sweet, natural tone and resonance come through. Yamaha says this eliminates the distortion that typical piezo pickups introduce when they overreact to hard attacks on the strings. A new preamp with built-in tuner and frequency-adjustable controls further enhances the sound quality and versatility of the A.R.T.-equipped APX models.

Did we say Yamaha uses "a special six-layer contact pickup"? We lied! The top-of-the-line APX900 (\$1349.99 list) uses FOUR of them, each placed in what Yamaha says are painstakingly determined, ultra-precise "sweet spots" for the best possible sound: two separate contact pickups mounted on the underside of the soundboard under the bridge, and two more along the treble and bass sides of the body. After all, designing a radical new pickup is only half the battle, and the war is lost if you don't place it properly on the guitar! The APX700 (\$909.99 list — \$979.99 for the left-handed APX700L and the 12-string APX700-12) uses only the two pickups under the bridge, and the entry level APX500 (\$609.99 list) gets you in the ballpark with a specially revamped update of Yamaha's trusty System 55 piezo pickup, with 3-band equalizer and built-in tuner.

All the APX guitars have beautiful, single-cutaway bodies that are a bit shallower than traditional acoustics, which combined with the new A.R.T. pickups makes them actually sound MORE like traditional acoustics when amplified. The APX900 has a solid spruce top and flamed maple sides, nato neck, abalone soundhole ring inlay, ebony fingerboard and bridge, and ivory/black body binding in four color variations; the APX700 has solid spruce top, mahogany back and sides, nato neck, abalone soundhole ring inlay, rosewood fingerboard and bridge, and ivory/black body binding in five color variations; and the APX500 has spruce top, nato back and sides, mother of pearl soundhole ring inlay, white/black binding and five color variations.

Wanna know and see more? Visit www.yamaha.com online!

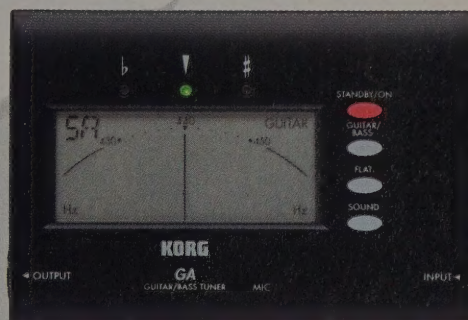
2006 APX-CPX New system



A GUIDE TO THE LATEST GEAR

KORG TUNERS

Korg's new compact GA-40 Guitar/Bass Tuner and CA-40 Chromatic Tuner both feature precise tuning and broad detection range at surprisingly affordable prices, with large easy-to-read needle-style LCD displays, built-in speakers and flip-stands, Sound Out function to produce a reference tone through the internal speaker, output jacks to keep the tuner connected during performance for quick tuning, built-in high-sensitivity mics for acoustic instruments, 100-hour battery life (okay, approximately), auto power-off after 20 minutes of non-use, memory backup to preserve calibration and Sound Out settings when power is off, and tuning accuracy to within plus or minus 1 cent and sound accuracy within plus or minus 1.5 cents. The GA-40 is a 12-note equal-tempered tuner that even has additional Low-B and Hi-C reference tones to support 7-string guitars and 6-string basses, and even a "Quinta Flat" mode to allow up to five semitones of flat tuning for baritone guitars! The CA-40 is a 12-note equal-tempered tuner, with reference tones covering the C4 to C5 octave, with meter (auto) and sound (manual) tuning modes and even convenient major/minor third pitch-adjust markings for use with wind instruments. Each tuner measures only 3.94 by 2.64 by .67 inches and weighs only 3.10 ounces. And all that lists for just \$29.99 (for the GA-40) and \$34.99 (for the CA-40). For more, head to www.korg.com online.



AUDIO-TECHNICA HEADPHONES

Audio-Technica's new Import Series headphones work in professional monitoring or DJ situations, or for home or portable stereo use. All feature neodymium magnet systems and rugged construction, putting what A-T calls audiophile-level sound quality in a comfy and roadworthy package. There are three specific pro-monitor phones that apply directly to this column (ATH-PRO700SV, PRO5V, and PRO5MS), all with low-profile, closed-back design for excellent isolation in loud environments, and rotating earpieces for easy one-ear monitoring. Audiophile touches include OFC oxygen-free copper cable and gold-plated 1/8" stereo connector and adapter. There are also no less than seven different clip-ons, earbuds and the like for portable and active use, and three reference-quality audiophile phones for serious home use with velvet or leather earpads, large-aperture drivers, double-air-damping and more.. All are well worth a look and a listen; prices range from \$119 to \$329 a pair. Check out www.audio-technica.com to learn more.



TONeworks SIGNAL PROCESSORS

Toneworks has three new dedicated modeling signal processors (what we used to call "effects pedals"): the AX3G for electric guitars, the AX3A for acoustic guitars, and the AX3B for basses. Each is powered by Korg's proprietary REMS technology, with 80 programs (40 preset, 40 user-programmable), 57 effects models (43 in the AX3A) with editable parameters, a Korg auto-chromatic tuner with mute, and intuitive knob-based interface for quick and easy program selection. The AX3G has 16 classic and modern amp sounds and 10 of the most sought-after speaker-cabinet sounds, plus a complete selection of popular effects from compressor to wah-wah, ambient effects like delay and reverb, drone settings for sitar-like effects, acoustic guitar simulation, and even an effect that reproduces the sounds of different pickups. The AX3B has 16 bass amp sounds from vintage to modern, and 10 popular bass speaker cabinet sounds, plus the full range of effects from compressor to octaver to reverb, as well as fretless, bowed and synth-bass effects. For both the AX3G and AX3B up to 6 effects can be used simultaneously, including noise reduction. The AX3A has 43 different acoustic sound models, replicating dreadnoughts, nylon-strings, resonators and more, plus 10 microphone models and specially crafted acoustic effects such as stereo chorus, echo, delay, reverb, even a notch-filter to reduce unwanted feedback. Up to 7 effects can be used simultaneously, including noise reduction. All units come with expression pedals and dual-purpose line/headphone output jacks. For all that, prices range from only \$99 to \$109. For more, visit www.korg.com online.

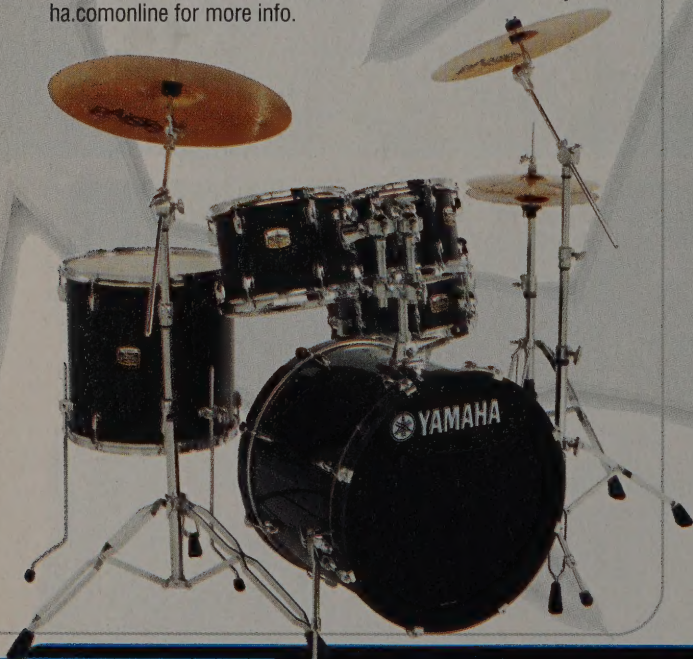


INSTRUMENTALLY SPEAKING

DRUM

YAMAHA

For years, Yamaha's been making state-of-the-art, pro-endorsed drums that have had our readers drooling. Now they've made that level of quality surprisingly affordable with the new Tour Custom series of kits. All-maple 6-ply shells (7-ply bass drums) with 60-degree bearing edges and air-sealed diagonal-seam construction show extra attention to detail, and mean the best possible sound for the price, with power, projection, and tone to spare. The sets come in three shell-pack configurations, with two optional hardware packs, and individual components also available. Lacquer-finish options include Black Onyx, Brown Sunburst, Sakura White and Ocean Blue. The flagship 5-piece Tour Custom kit carries a manufacturers suggested retail price of \$2,149 with Yamaha 700 series hardware, \$1,599 without. Visit www.yamaha.comonline for more info.

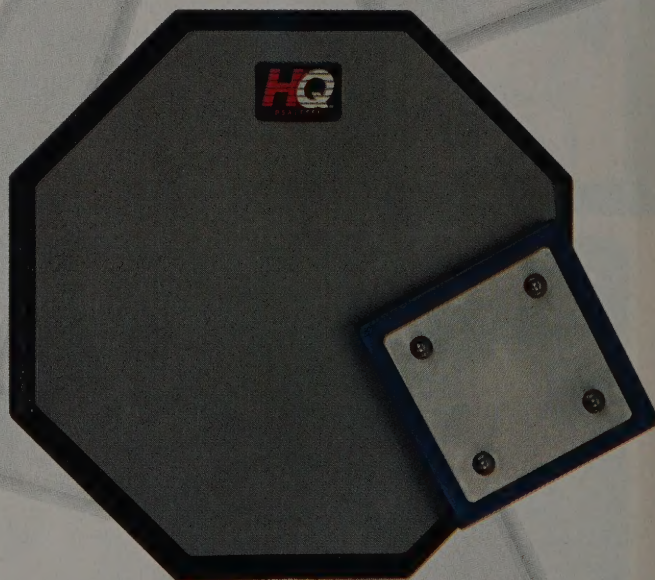


PRO-MARK

Finally, to hit those drums and practice pads - Pro-Mark has responded to popular demand by expanding its long-running, highly successful Naturals line, the first line of stick to be offered factory direct UN-finished. The Naturals now include models made of Japanese Shira Kashi White Oak. Available sizes are 2B, 5A, 5B, 7A and 747, all in wood or nylon tip, retailing for \$14.50 per paid for wood tip, \$14.95 for nylon tip. For more info on these and Pro-Mark's many other sticks, mallets, and other things to hit drums with, check out www.promark.com online.

EVANS HQ

To maximize your practice time before playing such a cool kit, try the new HQ RealFeel Snare Cartridge practice pad from Evans, the drum-head people. HQ has taken its popular RealFeel pad and added the innovation of a removable snare cartridge that gives you the option of a quick change from regular pad, to one with the real sound and feel of snare sizzles - something that just can't be replicated with a traditional pad, and given how central the snare is to rock drumming it's really a headscratcher that nobody's ever thought of this before! You can toggle between sounds in moments, all on one pad, and the snare cartridge can be removed from its hollow on the pad's underside. Like other HQ pads the new RealFeel Snare is 9 inches in diameter and is built to look good and last, with that same instantly identifiable steel gray/textured rubber look and black, powder-coated base. It retails for \$74.99. For more info head to www.evansdrumheads.com online.



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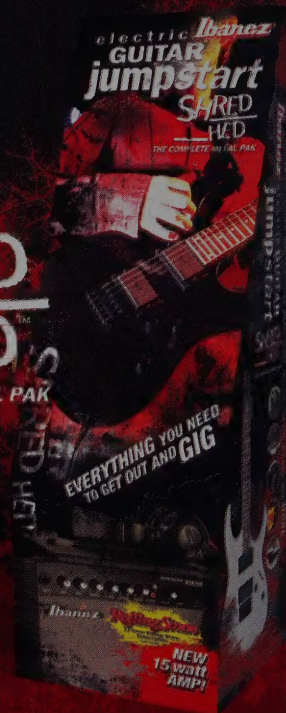
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Because Ibanez wants to make sure you get your Shred Hed from people who know guitars, you won't find Shred Hed and other Ibanez Jumpstart packages in department stores in between the diapers and detergents. Ibanez Jumpstart guitar and bass packs are available only at real musical instrument stores. Just go to ibanez.com/dealers to find the authorized Ibanez retailer nearest you. What are you waiting for?

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THE COMPLETE METAL PAK



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